



DOOMSDAY WONDERLAND

BOOK 02

Beards And Tails

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Doomsday Wonderland

(末日乐园)

by

Beards And Tails

Synopsis

What if earth devolved into a apocalyptic hellhole? What if you found out you not only have to survive just one apocalyptic event but have to struggle through multiple worlds with different end-world scenarios? And you get to meet more superpowered crazies than you can imagine!

Presenting the worst nightmare that your weird doomsday prepper neighbour with a bunker full of canned beans could have, Domsday Wonderland is a novel filled with subverted tropes, non-OP characters and a female friendly label which offends all politically correct fanatics.

As 'lucky' humans evolved to posthumans with abilities to adapt to the New World or mutate into disgusting duoluozhongs to survive, follow Lin Sanjiu as she struggle through the multiple challenges to just live one more day... and make sense of this New World that will no longer be the same.

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 101: Shen Lianqi and His Friends

"Actually, I'm embarrassed to admit that I have no directional sense."

Red flames danced, casting a wavering light on Lin Sanjiu's face. Roasted over the flames, the fats in the fish melted and oozed out like oil, which made a tantalizing sizzling sound. Every now and then, a few precious drops would fall into the fire, stirring the red flames.

"Besides, I'm unfamiliar with this place so I didn't know I would end up at the bottom of the ocean after jumping 300km south." Shen Lianqi laughed wryly as he touched the pair of shoes in his hand as if out of pity." Even though The Munitions Factory has already stopped the production of this old model, this still costs a lot on the black market. I didn't expect that it would be damaged by seawater. Sigh... The Munitions Factory probably didn't design this anticipating that someone would jump into the ocean."

Lin Sanjiu also didn't expect that she would meet Shen Lianqi, a few thousand meters under sea level. Moreover, a Shen Lianqi... like that.

She wondered if it would be too impolite if she asked him about "that" since they were only acquaintances.

Lin Sanjiu took some time to compose herself and finally pulled her eyes away from his body. She started turning over the half-cooked meat in her hands, acting nonchalant. As she didn't have metal skewers or a wooden stick, she had chosen a few long bones from the fish and threaded the pieces of meat with the makeshift bone skewers. "You have been living here, in the deep sea, for a month?" she asked as she focused her attention on the skewers.

"Yes," Shen Lianqi answered openly, "this is a very deep marine trench. Without those Escape Boots, I thought of climbing out, but it is a few thousand meters, and it was too hard. Luckily, there are

still some mutated sea creatures here, so I didn't starve to death. As time went by, I started feeling that living here, in the bottom of the sea, was quite carefree."

"So, the weird gigantic fish is one of the mutated creatures?" Lin Sanjiu frowned, pondering about it. "But, why did I see a McDonald's?"

"Do you know what a Deep-sea Dragonfish is? It is a species of fish which have a light-producing appendage, a photophore, on their lower jaw to lure their preys toward them..." Shen Lianqi explained while he gestured around his own lower jaw, "When I first arrived, I was lucky. The dragonfish did not notice me but instead focused its attention on another mutated... Cough... who knows what that was. The fish's photophore glowed, and the unknown creature foolishly walked into the dragonfish's mouth, as if hypnotized. That unknown creature looked really happy, so I guess that, to that creature, the dragonfish's head must have looked like females' nest. It probably entered the fish's mouth seeking for a mate, but the dragonfish closed its mouth and bit it into two.

Once she heard his explanation, Lin Sanjiu recalled hearing about how some deep sea creatures use their photophores for hunting. She suddenly shivered. She was probably smaller than the other mutated creatures here, so the dragonfish did not even care to bite her. If it did, she would have probably died, considering the daze she was in previously.

"Talking about this, Miss Lin, you are incredible! The gigantic dragonfish died within a few seconds..." Shen Lianqi sighed. "You said that it died from... Versu Poison?"

[Yup.] Lin Sanjiu nodded.

When Lin Sanjiu entered the "Mcdonald's", the door opened automatically for her. When she walked in, she didn't touch anything. However, when the floor started tilting, Lin Sanjiu fell

on the floor, and that was when her skin came in contact with the "McDonald's" — more accurately, the dragonfish's mouth. Once there was a direct contact, the dragonfish died from [Versu Poison] six seconds later.

"It happened too quickly, so I haven't really recovered from it," she smiled, feeling slightly embarrassed by his praise.

"Haha! But, you sure are quick when it comes to barbecuing that fish!" Shen Lianqi commented, laughing. Then, he smacked his lips looking enviously at the fish. "Sigh, since you poisoned it, only you can consume it..."

Lin Sanjiu shifted a little uncomfortably.

[How can you still think of eating fish with the way you are right now?] Lin Sanjiu thought silently to herself, she struggled to keep herself from muttering that thought.

"Oh, I'll give you my shirt. Even though there isn't anyone around, a lady shouldn't walk around all day without a top." Shen Lianqi took off his shirt and smiled. "Anyway, I don't need it."

Lin Sanjiu hesitated for a while, but she finally took it from him and wore it. A fishy stench instantly assaulted her nose.

When the fish was almost fully cooked, Lin Sanjiu sprinkled some salt on it. She immediately smelled the fragrance from the cooked fish meat with a hint of sea salt. The deep-sea dragonfish was hideous, and its meat was coarse and hard to chew. But to someone like Lin Sanjiu, who had not eaten meat for such a long time, the fish tasted flavorful and extremely delicious.

After eating 1kg of that fish meat, Lin Sanjiu finally stopped. It wasn't because she was full, but she found it a little difficult to continue eating looking at Shen Lianqi's current appearance.

After some consideration, she decided to ask the question that had been on her mind.

"Shen Lianqi, how... did you become a fish?"

Calling him a fish might not be the proper term.

Even though there were two things like gills on the cheeks of his face — his pair of feet were like two fins, with greenish-white fish scales extending from his calves, making his legs look as if a mermaid's lower body had been split — he still retained his overall human form.

"Haha!" Shen Lianqi laughed as he touched his head, a little abashed. "At the start, I wasn't used to it. But as time went by, I realized that being this way is quite convenient!"

[No, this isn't an issue about convenience...] Lin Sanjiu looked blankly at him as he revealed a fin sprouting from his arm.

[He is almost half a fish... But why do I keep feeling that has his personality changed so much from when we were at the pier.] Lin Sanjiu felt that Shen Lianqi had become more optimistic and calm, he seemed very different from the first impression she had of him, a quick-witted but extremely timid man.

"Great, your question reminded me of something. Come with me, I'll bring you to the place where I'm staying. Maybe, you could even meet my friends." Shen Lianqi suddenly stood up, his fish tail legs seemed very strong, and they easily supported his body.

[Friends? We are in the deep ocean, where do your friends come from?]

Lin Sanjiu was puzzled, but she stood up and kept some huge slices of meat she had cut from the dragonfish into her cards. Then, she walked with Shen Lianqi to the side of the water.

"Beyond this waters, there is a shipwreck. The ship is stuck in between two rocks, so the hull is largely undamaged. I am living there now."

Lin Sanjiu jumped into the water with a splash and started dog paddling with both her arms and legs. She was bad at swimming, so she started struggling after swimming for a short while, and

even swallowed a few mouthfuls of water. Shen Lianqi couldn't bear to see it any longer, so he told Lin Sanjiu to tie his shirt around his waist. She held onto the other end of the shirt, as he flicked his fins and pulled her along easily in the water.

"See, I told you it is convenient." He laughed delightfully.

Lin Sanjiu simply did not know how to respond.

Shen Lianqi seemed comfortable with his own body. [Perhaps, he chose to become a mermaid out of his own accord. Maybe he is using a special equipment from that Twelve Worlds Centrum?] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself.

Amidst the darkness, there was only the sound of water parting as both of them glided through the seawater. After Lin Sanjiu half swam for a while, pulled along by Shen Lianqi, he suddenly announced, "We're here!"

She took out her Ability Polishing Agent and held it high above her head. The silver light from the bottle spilled all around them.

Under the cold light, she saw a large, white passenger ship stuck between two rocks as described. Half of it was above the surface of the water while the other half was underwater. The passenger ship probably sunk during the tsunami. Even though its outer paint had already deteriorated, it still looked new.

Both of them stopped under the rock. They climbed to the tip of the rock and jumped onto the deck of the passenger ship. As Shen Lianqi had lived on the ship for a month, he was more than familiar with the interior. He guided Lin Sanjiu around, moving his two fish tails.

"The guest cabins are all underwater, but the captain's room and galley can be accessed. Oh, I also found a lot of bottled water on the bridge of the ship. There's enough for both of us."

"That's fantastic! I was feeling worried about it just now. I thought I might need to drink fish blood to survive," Lin Sanjiu

exclaimed as her eyes lit up.

Shen Lianqi had already moved the valuable bottles of potable water into the captain's room. As the passenger ship was from another country, the bottled water seemed to be from overseas. The design of the bottle was unique, but the seawater had disintegrated all the labels on the bottle. Lin Sanjiu twisted open a bottle impatiently and poured the refreshing mineral water down her throat. Gulping down that water, she felt as though her whole body was hydrated.

She had not drunk clean water for such a long time that she was reluctant to put down the bottle of water after she finished half of it, so she converted it into a card before following Shen Lianqi to the deck.

"You can look around here first." He smiled. "I'll go look for my friends."

Seeing her expression, he quickly added, "You don't have to worry. They're good people. After I came here, they helped me out a lot. You can walk around, I'm leaving, okay?"

[Are they people who ended up in the bottom of the ocean for some reason?] Lin Sanjiu wanted to ask, but Shen Lianqi had already dived into the water. Without much of a choice, she decided to look around. Lin Sanjiu held her [Ability Polishing Agent] and walked two rounds around the ship.

Her initial excitement about the ship gradually faded. Without another person accompanying her, the surroundings fell into a dead silence, and darkness enveloped her like a tangible essence. Her footsteps made long and dull echoes as she walked around the empty steel ship. Each time she thought about the fact that she was a few thousand meters below sea level, Lin Sanjiu would feel empty and lonely.

[Shen Lianqi must have some willpower, being able to live here alone for a month.]

When she felt that she was tired of exploring, she kept her [Ability Polishing Agent] and took out her card with the bottled water. "Huh?" Lin Sanjiu muttered after she changed the card into its original form. She suddenly felt that something was wrong. But before she could think about it, she heard Shen Lianqi's slightly excited voice: "Miss Lin, here are my friends!"

Chapter 102: Meanwhile, on land...

This was the time of the day when the sunlight was the strongest. The ground was covered by countless deep cracks, and the air, filled with dust and sand accompanied by the vicious heat, made breathing so difficult that it felt like one would die of suffocation the very next minute.

Usually, most survivors would look for a shady shelter and sleep during these hours, they would not act like these survivors here. About twenty to thirty people, around a white tent, were sitting directly under the sun, clearly enduring the torturous heat.

Even though all of them were sweating profusely and were visibly suffering, for some reason, none of them showed any sign of standing up to leave. They all sat under the sun earnestly and threw a glance at the white tent every now and then.

The height of the tent was about the height of a man. It was made of heat-resistant material, so it was definitely very cool inside. At that time, the entrance of the tent was tightly shut.

"That pretentious guy really knows how to put up a show. It's so hot, I could die."

The thing beside the thigh of a young man with a cultured appearance let out a soft complaint. The young man quickly held the thing that was speaking, revealing a pair of gray mittens on his hands which were clearly modified from socks. "Don't cause any trouble! If they hear us, we're finished," he rebuked softly.

A rabbit's head popped out from his palms. B.Rabbit, whose fur was still covered with the little pink carrot symbols, clicked his tongue in a disgruntled manner.

"Damn it. It's just a sh*tty ability. How dare he act like a tyrant..." he grumbled.

Hu Changzai actually felt the same way, but unlike the unruly

rabbit, he continued sitting upright and proper.

After sitting under the intense sun for quite some time, there was suddenly some movement from the tent. There was the sound of rustling clothes which was followed by heavy breathing sounds. A slight commotion arose among the people sitting outside the tent, then everyone lowered their heads as if they did not hear anything.

After about ten minutes, the entrance of the tent opened, and a woman with a flushed face walked out. She pulled up the zipper of her mini skirt with one of her hands before she stepped out. The moment she came out, a person said aptly, "Miss Meihuan, has Mr. Ark woken from his afternoon nap?"

The woman called Meihuan looked at the person speaking with her dewy eyes, "Mr. Ark just woke up. He is a little thirsty. Anyone who can provide Mr. Ark with some fresh fruits may enter the tent to get a visa."

Once she said that, the twenty to thirty people outside the tent were stunned, including Hu Changzai.

In the past, getting fresh fruits could be effortless, but now they were in Hyperthermal Hell...

"Miss Meihua, as you know, we can't store fresh fruits here. What about juice? I have quite a few flavors with me," a middle-aged man immediately asked.

Fruit juice was really the best option available in such a situation. The others in the group only had some bottles of mineral water. Thus, no one spoke for a while. Meihuan re-entered the tent without saying a word. She poked her head out after some time, "The person with the juice may enter!"

The middle-aged man entered the tent with a happy expression. But that was expected since this Consular Officer with the last name Ark was known to charge a lot for his visas. The man definitely got a deal being able to get a visa for a few bottles of

juice.

"I wonder what he will ask of us." Hu Changzai sighed softly feeling a little worried. "We only have a few presentable special items."

After he said that, Meihuan walked over to him holding a small booklet in her hand. She gestured to him with her chin, "Hey you, how many visas are you applying for?"

"Oh, I... I am not here to ask for a visa. We want to look for two people's names. We want to see if they've gotten any visas..."

"Looking for someone?" Meihuan stopped writing and eyed him. "That's expensive. What are the names?"

"One of them is Lin Sanjiu, the other is Hai Tianqing. Um, the jiu used is the word for wine, and the Hai is the word for sea."

—

Lin Sanjiu's kick had really sent him flying to the skies. When Hu Changzai got up and walked for half a day, he realized that he had landed in the neighboring province. Even though he had landed so far away, he had been lucky and quickly met B.Rabbit.

["But after that, both human and rabbit could not find a trace of Lin Sanjiu and Hai Tianqing."](#)

They were running out of ideas when they coincidentally heard that a Consular Officer from another world was nearby. Thinking that Lin Sanjiu might be searching for a Consular Officer, both human and rabbit came to this place holding onto a glimmer of hope.

—

After recording the requests, Meihua returned to the tent. She brushed past the middle-aged man when she entered the tent, the latter had quite a terrible expression on his face. Someone immediately asked, "What's wrong? You didn't get a visa?"

"I got it." The middle-aged man waved the paper in his hand but looked downcast. "I gave him three crates of fruit juice, but I only got a visa for a B-level world."

"Oh sh*t, a B-level world! That's a little dangerous. You might as well leave it to random chance... Where did you actually want to go?"

"Where else? I just want to go to Twelve Worlds Centrum!" the middle-aged man didn't say another word. He sighed and left.

Hu Changzai, who had been listening by the side, couldn't really make any sense of their conversation. When he heard the middle-aged man footsteps much further away from them, he pulled the other man over and asked quietly, "Does the destination on the visa make a difference to the Consular Officer? Why didn't the Consular Officer give that man the visa he wanted?"

The man, with a head of long hair, lifted his brows and sneered, "You are a first-timer?"

Hu Changzai nodded.

"No wonder," the long-haired man muttered. He didn't say anything else to Hu Changzai but instead just concentrated on playing with two glass balls in his hands. Hu Changzai waited for a while, but noticing that the man did not have the intention of saying more, he felt a little anxious. Just when he was about to question him again, he heard the middle-aged man stopping.

Hu Changzai looked up and scanned his surroundings. The middle-aged man was standing at the end of the street and was looking into the distance.

"Puppeteer!" the man's terrified voice traveled to the people surrounding the tent.

Hu Changzai's heart froze for a second.

"Puppeteer, is that really him?"

"Why is he here?"

"F*ck! Let's escape..."

Shortly after, the people around them stood up, and everyone started whispering to each other. Everyone was suddenly feeling extremely restless and unsettled. One street wasn't quite really that far. Before all the whispering stopped and before the people who had decided to escape could make a move, Puppeteer already appeared before everyone. He stood in front of the tent as if he didn't even need to take a step.

Puppeteer's appearance didn't change much from the time they saw him at the pier: he was still wearing the strange outfit, his skin was still a sickly white, but the powder dust around his eyes was now red instead of gold. The biggest difference was the entourage behind him.

There was a single mannequin in sight.

Whether it was a woman in her thirties, the 1.9m bloke, or the small, petite girl... Each of them looked like a living, breathing person, from their hair and skin to their pores. There was a pimple on each one of the young men. They were definitely not plastic mannequins.

Unfortunately, they all had the same vacant look and were walking very stiffly. Each of their necks was twistedly sewn with a thick, ugly thread. It was as if all of them had undergone a throat operation.

The whole place fell silent. Someone in the crowd gulped, and everyone heard it clearly.

There were a few people who did not recognize Puppeteer, but they were also shocked by the entire atmosphere. For a moment, no one dared to speak or even move. Puppeteer was known for his unpredictable moods, so no one dared to make any foolish moves.

Meihua walked out of the tent with a pale face. "Master

Puppeteer, what brings you here?"

"Are you the Consular Officer?" Puppeteer asked without a stoic expression.

Meihua looked at him furtively. "No, Mr. Ark is..." The next moment, a gust of wind struck her, and she was flung violently into the tent. The tent could not withstand the force, and its frame broke as the tent fell to the ground.

"Since you are not one, then why didn't you call the Consular Officer out?!"

A fat man covered in sweat crawled out from under the cloth material of the tent. "Oh, it's Master Puppeteer. I am Sian Ark. Do you need a visa?"

Puppeteer squinted his eyes, and the fat man immediately smiled solicitously. "Do you want to return to Twelve Worlds Centrum? Just state your offer, and I will give you—"

It was quite ridiculous that the fat man actually had the guts to ask Puppeteer to state an offer.

"Wait," Puppeteer stopped the man from backing away. "Before you give me the visa, I need you to help me look for someone's name," he said unhurriedly.

The fat man wiped the sweat from his forehead. "Go ahead."

Puppeteer suddenly looked around him, as though he sensed something. He frowned and slowly said a name: "Lin Sanjiu."

"Jiu as in the word used for wine?" Meihua blurted out unintentionally as she paused while trying to get out from under the tent.

Puppeteer's piercing gaze immediately fell on the woman. "Do you know that person?"

"No. No. It's... like this. Another person also mentioned that he wanted to check that name..."

She immediately pointed out without looking, wanting Puppeteer to take his eyes off her, "He's there. He has a rabbit with him... Huh?"

A yellow-haired man immediately leaped away from the direction she was pointing, exposing an empty spot behind him.

The author used a word play here which I was unable to translate. Lin Sanjiu's surname, 林, means forest, whereas Hai Tianqing's surname, 海, means sea. The author said that both Hu Changzai couldn't find the traces of people, Lin and Hai, which also oddly reflects their surroundings. In Hyperthermal Hell, the forests and sea have already disappeared from the landscape.

Chapter 103: An Embarrassing Reunion

Meanwhile, the second person that Hu Changzai and B.Rabbit were searching so hard for was lying on a large, comfortable bed with a silk bedsheet. After escaping from Puppeteer the second time, both human and rabbit would never imagine such a scenario.

Hai Tianqing had actually been staying in this place for quite a long time.

Honestly speaking, there was nothing much he could complain about. When Lin Sanjiu was lying on sand and pebbles, he was lying on a thick, soft, cloud-like mattress. When Hu Changzai and B.Rabbit were gnawing on the uncooked rice from the ration depot, he was served fresh vegetables and cooked rice on a silver platter. Sometimes, he even had dessert.

However, Hai Tianqing was still very, very unhappy.

This was because he was only wearing an underwear and nothing else. Both his arms and feet were tied to the four bedposts around the bed. Furthermore, he had been trapped in this pose for about two months.

The room he was in wasn't that big, but it was well-decorated. There was a thick rug on the floor, and a row of large flower pots by the wall under the window, where tomato plants, cucumbers, and other vegetables were grown inside. Those were the vegetables that Hai Tianqing had been eating. As the temperature in the room was much cooler than the temperature outside, the vegetables looked full of vitality.

Someone held and examined the stem of one of the plants, and a cheerful voice rang out in the room: "Brother Hai, do you like spicy food? I think this Bird's eye chili plant is growing well, the chilis will soon be ripe!"

Hai Tianqing stared at the ceiling, stony-faced but didn't say a

word. Just like a seedy love hotel, there was a large mirror on the ceiling of the room.

"Come on, Brother Hai, don't be like this all the time..." the owner of the voice approached him coquettishly, "Don't you like Sayo's cooking?"

"Get away from me."

The young woman looked up, showing her small, fair, heart-shaped face. She had black eyeliner around her pair of large eyes, and a wronged expression lingered on her face for two seconds before she suddenly spoke with determination and a voice full of hope, "Brother Hai, you might not understand my feelings for you now, but I believe my sincerity will move you..."

If he could move, Hai Tianqing would really want to knock his head against the wall. When Lin Sanjiu punched him, he flew to the sky and landed directly into a building. He was quite unlucky. Even though he tried his best to protect his head and face with his arms and also tried to curl up as tightly as possible, he still broke through a few stories, and in the end, his body was covered in wounds, and he fainted.

When he woke up, he found himself tied to this large bed without his clothes, and a "Snail Lady" called Sayo was sitting beside him.

He thought of her as a "Snail Lady" because her ability was [Snail]. This 20m² room was her snail shell. Within this shell, attacks from the outside usually couldn't hurt her, and everyone except herself would have their abilities nullified once they enter this room.

The rope she had used to tie Hai Tianqing was probably a Special Item, so despite being known for his strength, Hai Tianqing still ended up in such an awkward position.

"Brother Hai..." Sayo said, sounding a little hurt, as she pressed her head against his abdomen. Her hair spread out over his body

like water. "I really like you, but why can't you accept my feelings..."

"I already said this before. I'm married," Hai Tianqing replied, withholding his emotions.

Sayo scoffed, "I know! But your wife has already passed away. Are you going to remain single all your life, just for her? But... I like you the most when I know that you are so committed."

Over the two months, such conversations have been replayed many times. Other than "I'm married", Hai Tianqing also told her, "Are you man-crazy?", "Nobody likes to be forced", "I'm not worth it, why do you have to look for a middle-aged man?", etc. However, no matter how he rationally explained or provoked her, Sayo could not accept his rejection.

In the past, if someone told Hai Tianqing that he would be tied to a bed by a woman, he would have probably spit at that person. But now...

Hai Tianqing dodged Sayo's outstretched hand with some irritation. But his movements were restricted, so she eventually managed to touch his muscular chest, he immediately remarked sourly, "Even if you don't let me go, my 14th month in this world is almost over. By then, we won't have to see each other no matter what you want!"

Unfortunately, Sayo was unfazed when she heard what he said; instead, she grinned in a cheeky manner, "Brother Hai, I already considered that beforehand. After all, I am more experienced."

"What did you do?"

If he thought about it, over these two days, he had not seen her in the room much.

"Last week, I heard that there is a Consular Officer around this area. He is called Sian Ark, and I even know him!" Sayo ignored

Hai Tianqing's startled expression, as she continued smiling, "As you know, due to my [Snail] ability, I walk a little slow. So, over these few days, I have been moving my shell toward where Sian Ark is—"

"Bang!" She was suddenly interrupted. Someone knocked on the door heavily, and both people in the room were shocked by it. Looking a little afraid, Sayo gestured for Hai Tianqing to keep quiet.

"F*ck! Why can't this door be opened?" a crude voice came from the door.

Once he heard that voice, Hai Tianqing's eyes widened. He was just about to open his mouth and shout when Sayo stuffed a pillowcase into his mouth without any warning. His shouts were instantly reduced to "Uhh Uhh" muffles, while he struggled uncooperatively. Sayo stood up and walked to the door.

"Forget it, let's find another place if we can't open the door," another person urged.

"No! I want this room! This room has a special aura, it fits me!"

"Is there something wrong with your brain? Don't you know that Puppeteer might find us at any time? Why do you have to be so picky about a hiding place?" the voice which sounded more polite, sounded quite angry as well. "Besides, why would a house suddenly appear in the middle of the road. If it is a trap..."

"Um... Who are you?" Sayo asked timidly.

Once the young woman's timid voice reached the door, there was an immediate silence. After a few seconds, the polite-sounding voice replied cautiously, "We're sorry to bother you. We will leave now."

"No! I am not leaving. HEY! You, behind the door. Do you have some Chinese cabbage? I can f*cking smell it!"

"Y... yes. I have some."

After hearing that answer, the voice outside seemed to sound over the moon about it: "Quick! Out the door. We can negotiate about the price! I am not a bad person!"

After considering for a moment, Sayo opened the door slightly. Just as she said, "I can give you so—" a silhouette of a brown rabbit flew past her feet and into the room. She let out an "Ah!" and let go of the door after being shocked. The door opened a little wider.

The door revealed a face, which was indeed Hu Changzai. Hu Changzai peered into the room and was as stunned as B.Rabbit, who was on the ground.

"Executive... Hai?"

When Sayo heard that, she was flustered. Just as she tried to close the door, Hu Changzai pushed the door and force his way into the room. Hai Tianqing was so anxious that he was almost sweating, but he could only make the same "Uhh Uhh" muffles. B.Rabbit looked at Sayo then at Hai Tianqing before he let out a long, profound "Oh" and said, "I really couldn't tell that there is this side to you, Mister Hai."

The young woman held her blushing face, "No! Brother Hai keeps refusing me... though, I really want to—"

"Enough! Enough of all this nonsense!" Hu Changzai could no longer stand this, he marched to the bed and removed the pillowcase from Hai Tianqing's mouth. Hai Tianqing took a deep breath and shouted, "Why did you guys come in?!"

Before B.Rabbit could say a word, Sayo closed the door with a "click" while Hai Tianqing warned, "If you come in here, your abilities will be nullified!"

His companions were dumbfounded.

It was too late. Looking at both Hu Changzai and B.Rabbit and thinking that Sayo was not really a bad person, Hai Tianqing sighed and asked, "Where's Xiao Jiu? Did she escape?"

"We... couldn't find her. The story about the process is going to be a little long." Hu Changzai still seemed a little unable to grasp the situation at hand, "Who is this young lady?"

"Is Xiao Jiu a man or a woman?" Sayo asked with suspicion.

"What are you doing? Where is the Chinese cabbage?" B.Rabbit demanded.

Hearing these three unconnected questions directed at him, Hai Tianqing felt a splitting headache. After ten minutes, everyone was finally on the same page.

Even though their abilities have been nullified, Sayo did not have much of an advantage against two men. In the end, Sayo could only watch with tearful eyes as Hu Changzai quickly untied Hai Tianqing with a stern face, feeling a little too hard-hearted toward Sayo. Hai Tianqing got off the bed hurriedly, as he wore his clothes in an almost grateful manner.

Sayo's face turned ash gray when she saw Hai Tianqing's body quickly concealed by his clothes. The two men didn't really know how to deal with this woman who didn't seem to have any ill will, other than being a little man-crazy. Hai Tianqing finally groaned, "You took advantage of the fact that I was unconscious and locked me here. But I am not going to hold it against you. I'll treat it like it didn't happen. Let's just go our separate ways."

"No!" Sayo protested with teary eyes, "I want to be with Brother Hai!"

"Fine. Then, just come along," as Hai Tianqing lost his patience and said that, he walked outside without turning to look behind. Anyway, with the speed she was walking while she carried her shell, there was no way in hell that she would be able to keep up with them. As the two men, and the rabbit carrying a cabbage, walked out of the door, Sayo clenched her teeth and yelled, "I know a way of finding Xiao Jiu!"

Chapter 104: Hurray for Friendship?

Lin Sanjiu, who currently had no idea about her companions' predicaments, was at the bottom of the ocean and was feeling at a loss as to what to do. Shen Lianqi's friends were standing right in front of her, and by convention, she should greet them...

Shen Lianqi was in high spirits, he seemed extremely happy to introduce his friends to Lin Sanjiu. On the contrary, Lin Sanjiu could not even bring herself to smile. She held her [Ability Polishing Agent] up in the air, and under the illumination of the silver light, she saw three fully drenched... people and every minute detail of their appearances. Even if Shen Lianqi didn't notice anything weird before, he should have noticed it by now. But Shen Lianqi seemed unbothered.

In any case, his "friends" shouldn't be three bloated cadavers, right?

To be accurate, they were not mere cadavers. They no longer had their original body frames, but rather, they were like bloated humanoid sacs. Every movement they made was followed by a pitter-patter sound of dripping water. They had a putrid stench of rotten flesh soaked in water. It was obvious that these three "people" were passengers on the ship and died when the ship sunk during the tsunami. Despite their waterlogged faces, there were still traces of their prominent noses and deep-set eyes so Lin Sanjiu could tell that they were not Asians. The reason why these bloated corpses could still walk, smile, and speak was probably because of the long mouthpart on each of their faces.

[They are aquatic duoluozhongs,] this was the thought that surfaced in Lin Sanjiu's mind. With a quick gesture, she pulled out her mouthpart weapon with serrated edges, which was even longer and sharper than that on the duoluozhongs' faces, and immediately took a defensive stance.

Shen Lianqi immediately furrowed his brows. "Miss Lin, what are you doing?"

Before Lin Sanjiu could say a word, the obese — perhaps, he might not have been fat, but there was no way of telling his original looks — middle-aged man patted Shen Lianqi's shoulder and smiled while he comforted, "Hey, it is just a normal reaction. Suddenly seeing us like that, she would definitely be frightened..."

The woman on his left, with only a few sparse maroon hair on her head, spoke, "Hello, Miss Lin. Don't worry. We come with no ill intentions. Even though we ended up looking like this unsightly monstrosity, our hearts are still the same. We still have a human's heart."

The woman sounded very gentle as she caressed her own face for a little while. This action made a piece of her rotten skin fall off her face. Lin Sanjiu nearly vomited when she saw that despite the woman's words.

After their bodies had been soaked in warm water for such a long time, it was no wonder that their bodies were in such a state. The last "person", whose body had decomposed to a state which made it impossible to tell his or her gender, did not say a word; instead, Shen Lianqi stepped forward and said ardently, "Lin Sanjiu, listen to me. In this world, duoluozhongs have horrifying appearances initially, but as they consume more and more people, their bodies will be restored to a better condition. I have seen quite a lot of duoluozhongs who nearly look like any other human on land."

At this point, he pointed to the three duoluozhongs and said earnestly, "But look at them! Whether it is Miss Hannah or my bro Hank, the state of their bodies clearly show that they had never consumed any humans!"

"That's because there is no one in this goddamned place for them to consume!" Lin Sanjiu couldn't help yelling out.

"What about me?" Shen Lianqi hit his chest, "I have already been

living here for more than a month. They have never tried to attack me!"

This was something that Lin Sanjiu could not refute. Seeing Lin Sanjiu rendered speechless by Shen Lianqi's argument, the duoluo zhong called Hannah sighed. "Miss Lin, I hope you are someone that judges a book by its cover. As time goes by, you'll discover that we are not like what you think."

"That's right. Miss Lin, please keep your weapon." Shen Lianqi was also a little troubled by this. He turned around to face the duoluo zhong who looked like a giant popsicle and ordered, "Dale, why don't you haul that prawn up? We can eat dinner and chat. Miss Lin, will that be okay?"

Clearly, he wanted Lin Sanjiu to give his friends a chance.

Dale turned and left, while Hannah and Hank also went their own ways. They disregarded Lin Sanjiu's aggressive stance and walked away with neutral expressions as if they were returning home. One of them brought a pot and some tableware, and the other sat on the deck trying to make a fire. It was apparent to Lin Sanjiu that they have done these chores countless of times. On the other hand, their actions made Lin Sanjiu seemed a little awkward holding her mouthpart weapon in her hand.

"Miss Lin, don't worry." Shen Lianqi walked to Lin Sanjiu's side and assured her softly, "If it weren't for them, I wouldn't be able to adapt so quickly to a life at the bottom of the ocean... I trust them fully. Besides, Miss Hannah is the gentlest and kindest woman I've ever met..."

Lin Sanjiu gave him a sidelong glance. At the same time, the fire was successfully lit and brightened up half the deck. [That blush on his face must be the light from the fire, right?] she thought to herself feeling rather uncertain. After thinking about it, she decided she would just go along with things and continue observing. She nodded and went over to meet the duoluo zhongs

with Shen Lianqi, sitting down by the fire.

Hank immediately made a happy whistle. If the skin around his mouthpart wasn't so gloppy, it would have sounded even louder.

Within a few minutes, Dale came back with a large, human-sized, snow-white prawn. He left a muddy black footprint everywhere he walked so the prawn he pulled behind him was basically covered with the same black substance from his body. Shen Lianqi didn't seem to notice that as he cheered and took a knife to remove the prawn's shell — this was obviously not the first time he ate such a prawn. Without much effort, he removed the shell cleanly off the prawn, then its innards and cut it into strips before putting the meat in the pot.

He even cut a few large pieces of raw prawn and mixed them with its blood and innards. Then, he served this mixture to the duoluozhongs for their consumption.

This prawn was way more delicious than that dragonfish. However, Lin Sanjiu couldn't muster any appetite watching the three inhuman faces in front of her. Under this strange atmosphere, she put down her bowl very quickly.

"Do you find it hard to stomach because it is cooked in salt water? Do you want some mineral water?" After she said that, she handed Lin Sanjiu a bottle of mineral water. It was the same type of mineral water as the one she drank previously. It was also taken from the bridge. The ruby red bottle had a very sleek design. Lin Sanjiu felt very conflicted after being treated with such consideration by a duoluozhong. She suppressed the intense feeling of suspicion and twisted opened the cap. The cap opened with a soft "click" proving that no one had opened it before. Sensing that Shen Lianqi was watching her, she slowly drank a mouthful.

[That's right. Didn't she find it a little weird just now...] she thought to herself, frowning as she drank the water.

At that moment, the three duoluozhongs and Shen Lianqi were happily chatting away. They began discussing what they might find deeper in the ocean. This gave Lin Sanjiu the opportunity to think. While Lin Sanjiu pondered about her uneasiness, she took out the previous card containing the half-full bottle of water without anyone's notice. She examined it half-heartedly.

When she saw the words: [Another/Way - A Mermaid Cultivation Drink], a large refreshing gulp of water was sliding down her esophagus and into her body. That was it! When she took a quick glance at the card just now, she felt that the name of the bottle of water was too long! Shocked, Lin Sanjiu coughed violently till her face turned red. She was trying her best to cough out that mouthful of water.

[Does Shen Lianqi know the truth behind this water?]

Hannah, who was beside her, seemed startled by her reaction. The duoluozhong wanted to rush over to pat Lin Sanjiu's back, but before she touched her, Shen Lianqi held Hannah's arm. "Don't touch her!"

Hannah and the other two duoluozhongs were confused by his action. Holding on to Hannah's wet, rotting swollen arm, Shen Lianqi blushed again before he explained in an affected manner about the [Versu Poison] on Lin Sanjiu's body, "That... That's why you will die if you come in direct contact with her skin."

Lin Sanjiu coughed so hard that she couldn't say a word, but she was silently cursing Shen Lianqi in her heart for being such a loudmouth. Despite the half-peeling, soggy skin on Hannah's face, Lin Sanjiu could see her expression changing. The duoluozhong stood up, shocked and almost a little dazed.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know what Hannah was thinking, but Lin Sanjiu had a quick idea. She tried to ignore the itch in her throat and smiled at them, "Yup. You must be careful. Don't touch me accidentally. [Versu Poison] only take a few seconds to act."

Hank gave her a curt affirmation and kept quiet. Dale couldn't say a word, perhaps due to the state of decomposition his face was in. Thus, the situation around the fire was suddenly taken over by a subtle silence. The only person who seemed rather indifferent about it was Lian Shenqi. He held his bowl again and laughed, "Today's prawn taste better than usual." With that, he emptied his bowl, stuffing the prawn meat into his mouth.

Lin Sanjiu eyed the other without saying anything. She waited patiently trying to catch a moment to read the card. She grasped her card tightly, her palms were starting to sweat.

[Should I just make up an excuse to leave?] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself.

But at that moment, Hank started to move instead. He went to get another bottle of water and passed it to Shen Lianqi, "Hey, why don't you drink some water."

Lin Sanjiu's heart froze for a second, as she instinctively held her hand to block him from passing the water to Shen Lianqi. She smiled at Hank and asked, "Um, why don't all of you drink some water?"

Three, white rotting face stared at her at the same time. As her heart raced anxiously, Shen Lianqi had already started to gulping down mineral water. After a few large gulps of water, he put down the bottle and laughed, "Hank and the others don't need water. Isn't that convenient? They are not like us. Haha! If Hank didn't help me find for those bottles of water, I would have died of thirst a long time ago..."

The middle-aged obese man turned to Lin Sanjiu and offered, "Miss Lin, why don't you drink some water. Drink more."

Chapter 105: Lin Sanjiu's Contingency

Without the illumination from the fire, the oceanic trench returned to its original serene silence, enveloped by a darkness where one could not even see their fingers in front of them. It was as if it had always been this dark since the beginning of time, and the sound of gentle waves from a distance seemed to emphasize the deathly stillness in the air... until a soft voice broke the silence.

"You took such a long time, I nearly fell asleep."

Once the calm, collected, female voice abated, a silver light lit up the surroundings and the woman who just spoke. The woman had slightly disheveled short hair and a pair of emotionless amber eyes. She exuded a faint aura of ruthlessness that perhaps was created by her expression or that white bandage around her neck.

The sound of footsteps heading her way paused immediately as if startled by this unexpected encounter. Lin Sanjiu stood up looking at the people before her, a faint smile appeared on her face. "Don't you find this strange? You must be wondering why I knew that you guys would take action tonight, right?"

The three ghastly white, bloated faces remained expressionless under the silver light.

"Miss Lin, you've never trusted us all along?" Hannah said softly after a while.

"It's because of this." Lin Sanjiu smiled, shaking the bottle of mineral water in her hand.

[Another/Way - A Mermaid Cultivation Drink]

"Are you tired of squeezing with others in the public bus like a can of packed sardines? Are you tired of working like a dog till 7 pm?"

"As you sit among the ruins, gnawing on your moldy biscuit, thinking about your dead family and wondering why you're the

only survivor struggling to live each day and overwhelmed by existential angst?

"Being human is painful, and you don't have much control over your life.

"If someone offered you another way of living — a simpler, happier, and more relaxing path — would you accept it?"

This was the sales pitch that the Mad Scientist A thought up for the promotion of his newest experimental product. As hinted by the slogan, this bottle of Mermaid Cultivation Drink would cause a mutation on a genetic level, changing a human's body cells gradually into that of a mermaid's. Long-term consumption or consumption of a large amount of this drink would eventually change a human into a mermaid completely.

"Additional description: Mermaids are more advanced and better than humans (Mad Scientist A, 6958). Unlike humans, mermaids have abandoned all forms of negative thinking and negative emotions. Therefore, mermaids are living beings who are always peaceful, always happy, never suspicious, never doubtful, and do not know greed. Once you become a mermaid, you can live freely in the deep sea without nary a worry in the world.

"History: The mermaid cultivation drink was banned two years after the product had been successfully developed. Thereafter, it is only seen occasionally in remote places, far from civilization.

"PS: If you eat a fully transformed mermaid, you will either gain a more powerful and nimble body, extend your lifespan by a hundred years, or gain a more efficient brain. You will gain these attributes entirely by chance. If you would like to obtain all three attributes, please consume three different mermaids."

"This thing is obviously a special item generated by this New World and not water that was stored aboard this ship. As previous passengers of this ship, you should have known this fact a long time ago. Aren't you his good friends? Why didn't you tell him the

truth? Instead, you guys kept encouraging him to drink more of this water?" Lin Sanjiu laughed mockingly. "Well, that's because all of you can't wait for him to turn into a mermaid completely so that you can eat his flesh, right?"

The three duoluozhongs remained silent for a few seconds. After a while, Hank, who found all this very puzzling, asked, "How did you know about this? I purposely soaked the labels in water so that the labels would disintegrate..."

[So, these mermaid cultivation drinks were all originally labeled in the past? This would explain why these duoluozhongs understand the effect of the drink...] Lin Sanjiu sneered at him and didn't reply.

"D*mn it. If I'd known earlier, we wouldn't have drag this out. We could have just forced him to drink the entire crate. If we did that, we would have already eaten that precious mermaid flesh!" Hank grumbled.

"Unfortunately, Miss Lin, you're poisoned. Otherwise, we would have let you live a little longer as a mermaid. Once you go to the afterlife, please don't blame us," Hannah said with a soft voice which would have sounded as soothing as a gentle breeze if it had not been accompanied by her face.

"Thud." Once Hannah finished a sentence, a noise of someone hitting into something came from somewhere far in the darkness. Hannah immediately turned to look causing some of the tissues from her neck to fall to the ground. She saw Shen Lianqi's pale face in the vast darkness. None of the duoluozhongs expected that he would hear them so they couldn't react momentarily when they saw his face. Lin Sanjiu laughed out and shouted to him, "Did you hear that?"

Standing at a dimly lit spot, Shen Lianqi nodded his head, but it was difficult for Lin Sanjiu to make out his current expression.

"Sigh. Haha!" Hank squinted his eyes and laughed out with his

deep voice. Lin Sanjiu could not even imagine that he would react in this manner. Shen Lianqi's transformation was not complete, and now that their plans had been revealed, Lin Sanjiu did not understand how it would be even remotely funny. As she was just pondering about it, she knew the answer the very next second.

"Miss Lin, there must be some misunderstanding. Please don't criticize Hank and the others so harshly..." Shen Lianqi tried explaining to Lin Sanjiu as he hurried over. He actually sounded firm about his opinion yet gentle in his delivery.

"Didn't you hear our conversation?" Lin Sanjiu stared at him wide-eyed.

"I heard it." Shen Lianqi nodded and turned to look at Hannah tenderly. "Firstly, I trust that Hank and the others are not those types of people. I know better than anyone about their characters. In the worst case scenario, if they really want to eat my flesh, I would just cut a piece and give it to them. I won't die just like that..."

"Haha!" Hank laughed again with a loathsome tone. "Miss Lin, whatever you do is useless. Just give up. He's already 70% mermaid. By this point, his way of thinking is no different from a mermaid."

Lin Sanjiu had to admit that those words were probably true because once Hank had said that directly in front of Shen Lianqi, the latter did not react in a normal manner. Instead, Shen Lianqi nodded his head, as if he fully agreed with Hank. He even smiled and said, "I really like my current condition."

[This f*cked up mermaid cultivation drink can actually brainwash someone till this point!] Lin Sanjiu cursed inwardly.

"Xiao Qi, Miss Lin told us that she wants to leave. We will send her out, so why don't you go back inside and sleep? Wait for us, we'll return soon, okay?" Hannah said softly and gently, holding Shen Lianqi's hand.

Shen Lianqi nodded obediently as if his brain had been stolen by someone and answered with a tender "Yes." Next, he turned to Lin Sanjiu and said, "Miss Lin, if you want to leave, I wish you all the best. Stay safe. Look, Hank and the others are good to yo—"

Before he had finished his sentence, a black shadow flew toward him. It was too sudden for Shen Lianqi to dodge. A heavy boot backed by a violent strength struck the back of his head, and he was kicked to the ground. When his body hit the floor of the deck, Lin Sanjiu yelled out, infuriated, "It makes me mad just hearing you speak!"

As that kick was brutally strong, Shen Lianqi quickly fainted after feeling a sharp pain and a second of dizziness.

"This simplifies matters." Hannah eyed him and laughed out gently. Her words acted like a signal for the other duoluozhongs. Hank immediately aimed a direct attack at Lin Sanjiu. Lin Sanjiu wanted to retreat backward, but she heard a gelatinous sound behind her. Dale, with his terrible stench, was behind her. While they were talking just now, he had stealthily moved there.

If that was the case, Lin Sanjiu decided that she wouldn't even try to dodge. Since a duoluozhong's mouthpart was also part of its body, so if it touched her skin, Hank would still die...

However, Lin Sanjiu immediately noticed that something was amiss when the mouthpart approached her. She twisted her body and slid past Dale. Dale swiftly reacted with a follow-up attack. Lin Sanjiu dove to the ground and rolled away, barely dodging that attack.

She paused for a moment to take a closer look at the duoluozhongs' mouthparts. They were different now. Apart from the small section closest to their face, their entire mouthpart was wrapped by something black. It looked like the shell of some creature, and there were even knife-like spines on the edges of that thing.

When the three duoluozhongs noticed that they missed their target, Hank kicked Shen Lianqi into the water. Then, they quickly surrounded Lin Sanjiu in a circle. Trapped in the middle, it almost impossible for Lin Sanjiu to evade their mouthparts and come in contact with their bodies.

"Come on! Just looking at you struggling makes me tired," Hannah taunted with a gentle voice.

Lin Sanjiu mumbled something.

"What?" Hank asked as he was unable to catch what she had just said. Together with Dale, they flanked Lin Sanjiu with their mouthparts. "You don't have to beg for mercy. We have no use for you!"

Lin Sanjiu evaded that attack and smiled. "I'm not begging you to spare me, I only have one thing to say to you..." while she said that, she lowered her head dodging Hannah's sneak attack from behind.

"You're all too corny." Lin Sanjiu couldn't help laughing out. "But I can't blame you guys. When you first opened your eyes, all you could see must have been this deep, dank, bottom of the ocean!" As the duoluozhongs all looked at her suspiciously, Lin Sanjiu already pulled out a large tape recorder (like those in the 80s) with a quick gesture. This was another item she had gotten from the Red vs. White Challenge. It was called [Tape recorder].

"Description: You can record something on the cassette tape in this tape recorder. It can be operated without batteries. Other than that, there is nothing special to this."

Everyone in this world, except Lin Sanjiu, would find this item absolutely useless if they somehow acquired it. However, this was invaluable to Lin Sanjiu...

"Cough. Cough. Alright, I'll be the first! Don't snatch this from me!" B.Rabbit's voice came out from the recorder when Lin Sanjiu pressed the PLAY button. All the duoluozhongs were stunned.

The recording continued with some static sounds and the sound of B.Rabbit's hitting the mic with its paw, "Instant Freeze! Ice beams will shoot out from Lin Sanjiu's eyes, and anyone that she sees will instantly become a frozen sculpture! HAHAHA! How's that? You guys, my imagination is not bad, huh?" Lin Sanjiu held back a smile as her Pygmalion Choker started turning warm.

Chapter 106: Connected, Finally

There was something annoying, but not life-threatening, about living in Hyperthermal Hell. Due to the high temperatures during the day, no one could do anything but find a place to sleep. However, no matter where it was, the harsh brightness made it difficult for anyone to sleep well.

Thus, when Lin Sanjiu found herself in this dark, quiet environment, she suddenly found a happiness she had not felt for a long time. The surrounding darkness was like a mother's womb, gently wrapping around her, providing her a peaceful and restful sleep.

She slept so deeply that she could turn a deaf ear at the anxious "Guh, guh" sound beside her. Shen Lianqi had been tied up and was dangling from the ceiling of the passenger boat. As his mouth had also been stuffed, he couldn't make a noise. He thrashed about noisily, hitting his pair of tails against the walls of the boat. The sounds reverberated far throughout the empty steel ship and echoed for quite some time before it finally woke Lin Sanjiu.

"Oh, you're awake." Lin Sanjiu rubbed her eyes. She yawned while she took out the gag from his mouth but showed no sign of releasing him. As Shen Lianqi had gills on both sides of his cheek, he didn't have any difficulties breathing even with something in his mouth. The first thing that he blurted from his mouth was, "Where are Miss Hannah and the others?"

Lin Sanjiu crossed her arms and stared at him for a long time before she slowly answered, "Shen Lianqi. Shen Lianqi... I'm really impressed by you. I really don't know what to say. Even if you become a merman, do you lack the sense of aesthetics? I don't understand how you could fall for that duoluozhong."

Shen Lianqi blushed even though he was hanging from a beam, "Don't put it that way. Even though Miss Hannah's skin is a little

loose, she is very kind... Miss Lin, I'm not joking with you. Where are they? Really."

"They're dead. They were frozen solid, I kicked them, and they shattered into a dozen big and small pieces." There was a hint of cruelty in her voice as she purposely described the entire process clearly. "After they became ice, they looked way better. At least, they no longer looked gooey and they stopped dripping their corpse gunk everywhere."

From the description on the card, mermaids are unable to process any sort of negative feelings. Lin Sanjiu wanted to see how Shen Lianqi's remaining human side would deal with the situation. The hanging merman looked at her vacantly, without saying a word.

"I don't believe you. Is she really dead?" Shen Lianqi asked after quite a while.

"Do you want me to retrieve one of their remains from the sea? Oh, but that won't do. They were frozen then defrost by the warm sea so they probably already dissolved into the seawater." Lin Sanjiu answered descriptively without any sense of discretion. At the same time, she stared hard at Shen Lianqi, not knowing how he would react.

—

Despite how scheming the three duoluozhongs were, they probably didn't have much practical fighting experience once they awakened in the New World, so she settled the three duoluozhongs within half of that 5-minutes limitation that her Pygmalion Choker had, leaving them as broken fragments rolling around on the deck.

This 'instant freeze' ability described by B.Rabbit was really quite powerful and Lin Sanjiu couldn't help feeling envious of the people who had practical combat abilities from the start. Even now, whenever she needed to fight, she had to engage in hand-to-hand combat. How can she still be considered a Posthuman?

After sweeping all the hardened pieces of dead flesh into the sea, she used the silver light from her [Ability Polishing Agent] and found the unconscious Shen Lianqi floating on the surface of the sea above the tail of the ship.

Luckily, he had his fish body so his body floated up to the surface when he fainted. Otherwise, it would be hard to say if he could still survive...

Lin Sanjiu spent quite a lot of effort trying to pull him back up on the ship as she did not really know how to swim and because she couldn't touch his skin. After thinking about the problem for some time, she wrapped her hands with some cloth and found some ropes, which were used for tying the drape curtains in the ship. She tied the ropes tightly around Shen Lianqi, pulled him out and then hung him from a beam.

She did this also as a preventive measure as she didn't know if Shen Lianqi would suddenly react emotionally if he heard that Hannah was dead.

—

However, Lin Sanjiu did not expect the following reaction. Shen Lianqi remained silent for some time with his head lowered, then he sighed and actually smiled, "Anyway, nothing can be done about it now. Everyone must die someday. Non-mermaids can't live long. That's why being a merman is great."

[That was it?] Lin Sanjiu was stunned. [That isn't optimism, that is being totally heartless!] Although she knew that Hannah wasn't a saint, Lin Sanjiu didn't know why she felt a little indignant on her behalf, "Hey, let me tell you something. I don't plan on untying you. I already decided that you will stay on the wall for the remaining of the 14 months here."

"What should I do if I need to eat?" Shen Lianqi asked, crooking his head. He was neither worried nor angry.

"I'll feed you."

"Oh, thank you! I'll be counting on you!" Shen Lianqi laughed with ease, showing not even a bit of hatred for Lin Sanjiu.

"Don't talk to me. I'm afraid that I would punch you," she warned acerbically as she turned to leave.

Shen Lianqi's thought process, at that point, was basically very different from a normal human. Lin Sanjiu couldn't help feeling angry just looking at him. Ignoring him, she went deeper into the ship. Now, she faced a new problem. She had to find for potable water.

There was no way they were going to drink any more of that 'cultivation drink'. Logically speaking, there should be potable water stored in such a large ship. She raised her [Ability Polishing Agent] like a flashlight and searched every inch of the ship that was not underwater. She found nothing other than a big mess. She only found the storage room of ship after diving into the water.

Every cloud has a silver lining. Even though all the glass bottles have been shattered, there were still many crates of plastic mineral water bottle. Though the plastic bottles have already become soft after being soaked in warm water for such a long time, the crates provided some protection so they were still somewhat intact. From the amount of water, it should last them for a few months if they did some careful rationing.

After she made multiple trips to the storage room to bring out the potable water, Lin Sanjiu sighed as she walked past the bridge of the ship once more. Suddenly, she had an idea and she walked in.

She looked around the bridge with her 'flashlight' and realized that the cardboard box used for storing the 'Mermaid Cultivating Drink' was undamaged. On the exterior of the box, there was a picture of a pair of peculiar-looking merman and mermaid swimming while holding each other hands...

She actually considered herself quite lucky because the drink was only effective if consumed in large amounts. Furthermore, it was slow-acting. Lin Sanjiu couldn't help shuddering when she remembered finding a patch of dangling fish scales on her elbow.

She really did not like that item but she stuffed the remaining 68 bottles of mermaid cultivation drink back into the cardboard box and stored everything into a card.

After fully exploring the ship, she fed Shen Lianqi a bit of water and suddenly found that she had nothing to do. This was the first time she actually felt this way ever since the New World descended.

After contemplating for a while, she looked for a place where she couldn't hear Shen Lian nagging, then she sat down cross-legged and quietly examined her abilities and items. She realized that she had quite a few special items.

[Pygmalion Choker]: The item will grant its user an ability described by another person. The effect will last for 5 minutes.

[That spring, when the cherry blossoms fell, your sweet laughter melted my world]: The author uses this to accumulate word count and males who hear it will lose all ill intentions. The number of times this item can be used is dependent on how many times the user had been in love.

[A bag of cat litter]: Even though it is bright orange, it is a great tool to cover user's tracks.

[Oh My God! My wallet is missing!]: This will freeze the target's Special Items for 1 hour. The target will not be able to use their Special Items for 1 hour.

[Teru Teru Bozu Defense System]: Once hung on a ceiling, it will watch over the user like a security guard, but the noise it makes is horrible.

[Tape Recorder]: It is basically what it is.

[Another/Way - A Mermaid Cultivation Drink]: Long-term consumption will cause a human to turn into a mermaid, but not a beautiful one...

[Ability Polishing Agent]: It only states that it can polish abilities and the rest of the description is incomprehensible. It is now relegated to Lin Sanjiu's flashlight.

She gave the remaining prizes that she won from the Red vs. White Challenge to Hai Tianqing and the others, giving them two items each. With eight items in hand, she suddenly felt like a Nouveau Riche. In stark contrast to her line-up of special items, her abilities really look quite insignificant.

She had three active ability.

[Planar World]: Planar World (Level up count: 1) allows Lin Sanjiu to convert up to 8 items every day. There is no limitation to the number of times these items can be revert to their original form or converted back to cards. The larger the mass of the item, the harder it is to convert into a card. The user will also need to use more energy for conversion. With Lin Sanjiu's current stats, she is unable to convert anything with a mass above one ton. As her physical capabilities improve, the upper limit of this ability would also gradually change.

Lin Sanjiu can control the speed and direction of the converted card if it is within 35m from her hand. The card is bound by the law of gravity once it is further than 35m.

Planar World also allows Lin Sanjiu to summon one Diary card. The Diary card would record everything that happens within a five-meter radius for up to three hours. Once it has recorded up to three hours of information, it has to be retrieved and erase before it can start a new recording.

Lin Sanjiu counted the cards she had in her deck. Other than her special items, she had a [Mouthpart] card. It was extraordinarily long and very sharp. Lately, this has become the item she used

most frequently and one of her most useful weapons. Even though she liked using the whip-like weapon, she was unwilling to take it out unless a situation was too dire. After all, it was part of a duoluozhong's face so it was starting to smell bad as the remaining internal tissues within the mouthpart was rotting. It was also not that easy to use as it had no handle.

Lin Sanjiu had thrown away the police baton, small knives, and other makeshift weapons long ago as she did not need them anymore. There was also a [Rob the Poor to feed the Rich box] card in her deck, it was a one-time use item. The rest of her cards are all her daily necessities: an extra pair of combat pants, the remaining coffee and chocolate, some sanitary items and underwear, and Ren Nan's corpse...

"Wait! That is not a daily necessity!" Lin Sanjiu drew out her [Ren Nan's Corpse] card. She had nearly forgotten that this card even exists. Looking at it now, she had a vague feeling as if the events happened in another lifetime.

Apart from her Planar World, her two other active abilities were [No coincidence. No story] and [A Twinkle in the Sky] — it was that latter ability which allowed her to send her companions flying so they all managed to escape from Puppeteer.

Even though the combat value of her abilities was quite low, she wasn't worried about them. Instead, when she thought of her [School of Higher Consciousness], she couldn't help frowning.

"Should I just meditate and enter that mindscape to see what is going on?" she sighed, "I need to find a way to activate it again—"

Before she finished her mumbling, she heard a buzzing sound from afar, it radiated out quickly like water ripples.

[Is it a duoluozhong?] She leaped up and looked around cautiously but she did not spot anyone. She listened a little more carefully and felt that the sound wasn't like that of a duoluozhong. The thing which produced that sound seemed small...

She got her answer very quickly.

She spotted a bird-like thing which was only about the size of a palm. It flapped its wings at high speed and flew toward her at a rapidly, growing from a small dot in a distance to its actual size, until it was just before her eyes. It was only then that Lin Sanjiu had a clear view of it. It was a small white paper crane.

The paper crane stopped in front of her, almost as if it was using its two hand-drawn eyes to confirm Lin Sanjiu's identity. After that, she heard an unfamiliar female voice, "It's all because I want to be with Brother Hai. Otherwise, I wouldn't waste one of my paper cranes to look for a woman I don't know! Do you know how expensive this paper crane is? It uses a pay-per-use model. In the Twelve World Centrum...Oh no? It is already recording! No! Brother Hai can't speak to her! Alright, B.Rabbit. Ok. Quick! You can talk to— "

[What the hell is this?]

Just when Lin Sanjiu was feeling very puzzled, she suddenly heard B.Rabbit's voice coming from the paper crane: "Xiao Jiu, where the hell are you? Finding you is so hard! Hey, let me tell you something. I've already found and eaten some fresh vegetables, what about you? Are you still licking that melted chocolate? HAHAHA!"

"Get to the point!" Hu Changzai shouted impatiently from the background.

"Oh, yeah... This, uh, this paper crane will record your voice and we will hear it when it comes back to us. If you are not unconscious or dead, please leave a message after the 'beep'! There is so much I want to tell you! Hehehe! Did you know that Hai Tianqing..."

"Shut up!"

Hai Tianqing's furious voice rang out and B.rabbit's voice was immediately cut off. Then, the paper crane made a "beep".

Lin Sanjiu was stunned.

Chapter 107: Nearing Farewell

The palm-sized, white paper crane almost vanished into the sunlight when it flew up into the blue sky. Sayo only noticed it when she heard the buzzing of its wings as it circled down from mid-air.

"The paper crane is back!" she shouted excitedly, stretching out her palm. The paper crane stretched out its wing and landed on her palm as if it was alive. Her sentence caught the attention of Hai Tianqing and the others, they stopped and quickly surrounded her.

"It's finally back. I thought that it was already damaged by the elements out there. It has nearly been two months, I was worried..." Hu Changzai blurted out ruefully as he couldn't help feeling nervous when he thought of that possibility.

Sayo rolled her eyes at him before leaning against Hai Tianqing's body. She pouted her lips coquettishly as she looked up at him, "Brother Hai, I wonder where your friend is. This type of paper crane usually works extremely fast, it must be due to the distance..."

"Fine! Fine! Play the recording! Quick!" B.Rabbit said as he thumped his hind foot impatiently.

After being separated from Lin Sanjiu for over two months, her companions heard her cool, collected voice once again. The paper crane could only record for a short time of two minutes. However, they did not expect that Lin Sanjiu used less than half of that time. Her message finished very quickly, leaving them looking at each other, momentarily at a loss of what to do.

"Somewhere very far away? Can't get out? Is she locked up by someone?" Hu Changzai was the first to speak, feeling a little unsettled by her message.

"Locked up? If she is locked up, do you think she can still send

this message?! She wouldn't even tell us clearly where she is! She obviously doesn't want us to look for her! She even told us to find for a Consular Officer without her! Bah! Who wants her to come along anyway! She thinks too highly of herself. I will go to a comfortable New World and not bring her along!" B.Rabbit was furious after he heard the recording and his veins were definitely popping under the fur of his.

"Enough. Come on, stop it." Hai Tianqing frowned, trying to ignore Sayo's unrestrained ogling. "I guess where Xiao Jiu is, probably isn't that safe. Or as she mentioned, it is a place where you can enter but not escape, so she doesn't want us to know where she is exactly..."

"That's right," Hu Changzai sighed, "B.Rabbit, if we know where she is, we would definitely go look for her. If we get trapped there and we have no visas, who knows when we will ever meet again once we are sent to random worlds. So just cut it out, we need to think about what we should do next."

"What else can you do?" Sayo interjected. Among the four of them, she was the only one who was in a good mood. She smiled widely as she clung on to Hai Tianqing's arm, "Just as your friend said, we should go get our visas! Once you have a visa, she might be able to look for you in the future..."

Hai Tianqing quickly pulled back his arm, looking at her sternly, "If you continue touching me, you don't have to follow us anymore. Our problem here is finding a Consular Officer."

On top of that, if they actually manage to find a Consular Officer, Hu Changzai and B.Rabbit cannot show their faces. Who knows if Puppeteer already publicized their names and faces? It would be troublesome if someone reported their whereabouts to him.

Sayo chuckled and suddenly said to Hu Changzai and B.Rabbit, "You two can enter my shell."

Even though the beautiful white house was not physically

attached to Sayo, it moved forward slowly with Sayo. Once she stopped, the house stopped at the same time, some distance away from her.

"Huh, what's going on?" Hu Changzai said as he carried B.Rabbit and entered the house cooperatively.

As she saw the door close behind him, Sayo smiled at Hai Tianqing and whispered, "Brother Hai, you have to reward me." Before he reacted, she suddenly raised her arms and shouted, "Mr. Ark! Ms Meihuan!"

Both human and rabbit in the house were shocked.

Hai Tianqing widened his eyes, puzzled— because he could not see anyone in front of them, it was still the same vast stretch of yellow sand and ruins.

However, after Sayo shouted for a few times, two people indeed appeared behind a desolated half-collapsed building.

"Who called me?"

A short fat young man who looked rather unhappy poked his head out from behind the building, he looked a little guarded. Without even asking, Hai Tianqing could tell from one look that this man was not originally from this world. There was a unique black ink marking on Sian's forehead. It looked like an abstract drawing of a bird preparing to fly. He wore ten over earrings on one of his ears and nothing on the other.

Having a resting sad face, Sian appeared unhappy even when he spotted Sayo's familiar face, "It's you. No wonder you can find me immediately." He probably knew how slow Sayo was, so he walked toward the two of them impatiently as he said that.

Sayo looked behind him and questioned in surprised, "Who's she? Where is Ms. Meihuan?"

"She spoke without thinking and nearly implicated me. Who knows where she is right now." Sian replied with the same bland

expression as if he was talking about a stranger. He clearly had no intention of introducing the tall and slender woman behind him. "Hey, regarding this [sleeping bag] you gave me... How many people can recognize it other than you? If someone can find me every time I am resting, wouldn't I die from overworking?"

"Nah, no one else." Sayo quickly smiled, "Mr. Ark, I need four visas from you."

"Umm.." Sian took in a sharp breath of air as he eyed the two people in front of him.

—

While Hai Tianqing and the rest waited anxiously for the answer from the Consular Officer, Lin Sanjiu, who was a few thousand meters below sea level, was thinking about the same thing. A fearful howl rang out and scared her.

The howl seemed to come from a person scared out of his wits, that was none other than Shen Lianqi who was still hanging on the wall, "Ah! Aghhhh! Is there anyone around! Help! Help me!"

"Splat." Lin Sanjiu threw down a fish which she was descaling and took out her [Ability Polishing Agent]. She flashed the silver light on his face and asked grumpily, "Why are you shouting? Did you have a nightmare?"

Once the light hit his face, Shen Lianqi narrowed his eyes involuntarily. He only recognized Lin Sanjiu after a few seconds, "Miss Lin?! Why...why are you here? Wait, where am I?" He looked down and saw that he was tightly bounded, he quickly complained, "Why did you tie me up?"

Lin Sanjiu wasn't even a bit surprised by Shen Lianqi's reaction.

After sending off the paper crane, she did not allow Shen Lianqi to touch even a drop of that Mermaid Cultivation Drink in the following two months. The first few weeks were alright but recently he had started showing signs of such bewildered behavior

— it was as if whatever was possessing his mind was losing grip due to the lack of the cultivation drink. Occasionally, Shen Lianqi would even forget that he was once a merman.

But this was the first time he actually seemed lucid as if he had woken up from a long dream.

"Look at your own feet." Lin Sanjiu sat down and continued descaling the fish.

The patches of scales on Shen Lianqi's legs have lessened by quite a bit, the gills on his cheeks were also starting to seal. However, his feet were still in a tail-like form. Thus, when he saw them, he screamed again, "Ah! My legs! My... how did it become like this? Hey?"

His words suddenly became sluggish.

"So, you remembered?" Lin Sanjiu threw him a sidelong glance.

Shen Lianqi's face instantly turned pale green, his lips even started to tremble. He was completely different from his past optimistic and carefree merman self. "How did I... I become a merman?"

Apparently, the effects of the Mermaid Cultivation Drink was finally wearing off. Lin Sanjiu guessed that he would probably remember everything soon so she released him from the bindings. He immediately slid to the floor probably because his limbs were too numb from being tied up for such a long time.

"How do you feel now?" Lin Sanjiu asked, feeling slightly curious.

Shen Lianqi was in a bewildered daze. He seemed to be at a loss after his memories started flooding back to him. After quite a long time, he responded, muttering, "It feels like I'm watching a movie. I can still remember what happened... but it is like I'm watching a documentary...Uh, wait?"

His face suddenly turned white and he looked on the verge of vomiting, "What are those three bloated, rotting things?"

Duoluozhongs? Corpses? Ah, I actually use this hand to hold that dead female arm?"

[This is how a normal person would react.] Lin Sanjiu was pleased to see that but an impish thought suddenly crossed her mind, "You didn't only hold her arm, you were even quite fond of her. I apologize for breaking up your relationship."

Shen Lianqi was almost about to cry. This feeling was like he had woken up to find that he had eaten a pile of shit when he was sleepwalking. It was so disgusting that he didn't know how to process it.

After a long time, he gradually calmed down. He wiped his face before he spoke to Lin Sanjiu in a serious tone, "Miss Lin, you saved my life and I don't know how to return the favor. But I'm indebted to you, I won't forget this. Don't worry. In the future, if you need help, you just have to tell me and I'll definitely..."

"Alright, alright. I didn't really do much." Lin Sanjiu felt rather embarrassed by his display of gratitude so she wanted to change the subject quickly, "You should be hungry, right? I just caught a fish. We can eat it together."

Shen Lianqi looked at the fish and his face turned pale again, "Ugh... Are we going to eat...that?"

"What's wrong?"

"That looks quite...quite gross..."

Gross was really an understatement. If Lin Sanjiu didn't identify it as a fish, he would never have thought that it was a fish.

"Don't be so squeamish," Lin Sanjiu shook the fish in her hand, a dozen legs around its belly started swaying with the momentum. "You have been eating this for the past two months."

Just when he felt his gastric juice rushing toward his throat, he stopped when he suddenly realized something. His nausea even abated. "Miss Lin, how long have we stayed at the bottom of the

ocean?"

"It is too dark here. I can't tell you the exact number of days. But I think it could be around three months."

Three months was her estimation from the day she saw the paper crane.

Shen Lianqi looked upward, trying to count the number of days. After a long time, he suddenly exclaimed, "Ah!"

"What?" Lin Sanjiu asked. Seeing him constantly frightened and flustered after he turned back to human, she felt, in some sense, that he was a little more affable when he was a merman.

"It is almost time..." Shen Lianqi frowned as she looked at her, his face was still a little pale, "I would probably leave this world tomorrow night. Miss Lin, it should be about time for you too?"

Lin Sanjiu took quite a while before she understood what he meant.

Chapter 108: The Second World

Lin Sanjiu could still remember the first day of Hyperthermal Hell clearly.

She could still remember the sticky sensation between her fingers when her hands were covered in her ex-boyfriend's blood and how she couldn't wash away the bloodstain under her nails no matter how hard she tried. She remembered the heat wave which lunged at her when she stepped into the carpark. She could remember how her heart raced the first time she saw a duoluozhong. It was as clear to her as yesterday.

"14 months passed so quickly." she knew that she was dreaming yet she was still lucid, so she couldn't help lamenting.

Everything around her looked so realistic that Lin Sanjiu doubted if she was really dreaming. She looked around but she couldn't tell how large this place was. The darkness around her seemed to extend forever, with no boundary. The only eye-catching thing in this space was the large white cube not far from her. It was about her height and its width could probably fit three to four people. On the upward face, she could see the black words: Hyperthermal Hell.

This was the dice that Luther mentioned about.

When Lin Sanjiu stepped forward, she suddenly thought of Luther. [How are Luther and Marcie now? 12 should have already taken on his corporeal form. With such a scary person like 12 beside them, will they still have peaceful days ahead?]

Thinking about her old companions, she couldn't help think about her new companions. [Have B.Rabbit and the others received their visas? If so, to which world would they go next?]

In these 14 months, Lin Sanjiu met so many people, companions, enemies, and acquaintances... Yet, in the end, she didn't expect

that she would continue alone.

Knowing that she will wake up from her dream alone in a new world, she sighed softly. For a split second, she suddenly felt a lingering attachment toward Hyperthermal Hell.

"Alright, I have to go." Lin Sanjiu said as if to encourage herself, as she rubbed her hands and walked forward.

The large dice in front of her suddenly started vibrating as if it were alive. Shortly after, it shot to the sky as if it were tossed by an invisible hand. In the darkness, it grew smaller and smaller, rotating as it disappeared upward.

Even though she knew that the dice would not fall on her, she couldn't help stepping backward. She looked upward as the white dice spun. Every now and then, she could see a line of word appearing. The dice gradually appeared larger and larger until it landed on the ground soundlessly.

She rushed forward and looked at the words facing her, her heart was pounding.

The next world was simply named, "Garden of Eden".

Lin Sanjiu was a little taken aback. That name didn't seem suitable for an apocalyptic world. With the names like Hyperthermal Hell, Whiteout Blizzard, and Black Death City, she could imagine what sort of world they were. But Garden of Eden...

Just as she was feeling puzzled, she felt a sudden exhaustion from deep within her consciousness. It quickly enveloped her mind and she suddenly felt that she could no longer keep her eyes opened. She felt as though she hasn't slept for many days so she didn't even have a chance to resist. Darkness quickly crept into her consciousness.

Lin Sanjiu did not know how long she slept. Before she could open her eyes, the first thing Lin Sanjiu noticed was the refreshing breeze brushing across her exposed skin. The breeze was gentle

and did not carry even a grain of sand. It was cooling, and she even felt a little cold compared to where she once was.

She had left Hyperthermal Hell. Her body sent this information to her brain before she was even fully awake. She felt as if her entire body was soaked in a pool of cold water. How long has it been since the temperature around her was a normal 20-odd degree? She couldn't imagine that this temperature could feel this cooling...

Lin Sanjiu rubbed her eyes as she propped herself up with one arm. When she opened her eyes, she was dumbfounded. If Garden of Eden meant this, Lin Sanjiu wished that all the New Worlds she encounters in the future would have such a nice, peaceful sounding name!

Even before Hyperthermal Hell descended on her homeworld, she had never seen such a clean, beautiful city.

[Wait. This is a city, right?] Lin Sanjiu was a little unsure. This place was novel to her and felt exactly like a foreign world. The 'city' was filled with conch-shaped buildings, with flowing lines and structure. They were about 70 to 80 stories high and were in a row of three to five. Meanwhile, the residential houses were two to three stories tall and were all covered by thick greenery that their structures were not very visible.

She saw a tall black tower in the distance. The oddly shaped building stood like a guardian overlooking the entire city.

There were travelators on what Lin Sanjiu assumed were sidewalks and they looked rather comfortable to stand on. She saw a mother and her two children on a travelator. They chatted and laughed as they were quickly transported to some location. Not far from her, she saw a young man digging out a large handful of sparkling bright things from what seemed to be a vending machine and putting them directly into his mouth. As she looked further, she saw that everyone seemed rather serene and natural.

[Didn't Luther say that we would be sent to another doomed world? Could Luther's information be wrong?]

If she thought about it carefully, Luther and Marcie had only experienced two worlds. Perhaps, they only had some incomplete information...

Comparing herself to the residents in the city, Lin Sanjiu tugged at her shirt awkward and dusted off the sand on her body. When she felt that she had pretty much tidied up herself, she walked toward the city. The young man, who was eating, looked at her for a second. His expression remained unchanged as he lowered his head and grabbed another handful of sparkling, red little balls and continued eating.

Next, Lin Sanjiu heard an unexpected "thud" as she hit her head against something. She looked up, feeling a little confused. There was nothing in front of her.

[What is it?] Lin Sanjiu's nose hurt so much that she almost felt tears. She stretched out her hand with uncertainty and touched a screen of some sort, it was hard and transparent— was it glass?

She reacted on hindsight. [Why is there a screen of glass here?]

Lin Sanjiu used her hands to feel the screen of glass and realized that it was very large, she wondered who would even install a wall of glass here. The young man who was chewing on the little balls looked at her again.

Stepping forward from her previous spot to the glass, she was now very near to the man. "Hey, hi. It's my first time here so I'm not quite familiar..."

The young man seemed to understand her. He crooked his head and observed her for a while before he pointed toward her back.

[Is the entrance behind?]

Lin Sanjiu quickly turned behind and was stunned. She took a quite a few seconds before she could comprehend the situation in

front of her.

Purgatory probably looked like this.

From where she stood till the edge of the horizon, she could see a boundless land of black soil. The plants which dotted the landscape were not a lovely bright green but a murky greenish black. They were like the skin of a dying old man.

Heavy lead-gray clouds hung from the sky, making the sky seem so much closer to the ground. It was as if the sky was pressing down on the earth, exerting a gloomy pressure on a person's heart.

There was naturally no one living among the decrepit ruins of collapsed buildings. Occasionally, something the size of a human head would crawl out from the ground. It was a beetle of some sort whose appearance would give a teenage girl nightmares for a week. It stared at Lin Sanjiu with its large pair of red compound eyes and quickly furrowed into the ground again.

Even though Lin Sanjiu had already seen quite a lot of disgusting creatures living at the bottom of the ocean, she couldn't help shuddering as goosebumps appeared on her skin.

[What's wrong with this world?]

She turned back quickly. Just as she was about to shout, she realized the young man eating the small round balls was nowhere to be seen. Lin Sanjiu scanned her surroundings and found no one around her. She hit the glass screen while she shouted loudly, "Hey! Is anyone around? Can anyone tell me where the entrance is?"

No one answered her. She searched around the glass screen trying to find the edge of the screen in front of her. But she quickly became disappointed.

This clean, beautiful city seemed to be enclosed in a glass globe. She could not feel the top edge of the glass nor any gap near the ground. Worst of all, she was outside its protection.

At this point, even an idiot could tell what was going on. Some sort of scary disaster surely devastated this world and wiped out a majority of the population and habitable land. However, the technical expertise of the residents here was higher than that of Hyperthermal Hell. This probably resulted in the creation of this "snow globe city" to protect the remaining human population.

The problem here was figuring out what that disaster was.

Lin Sanjiu knocked on the glass and continued shouting. Eventually, she sighed and stopped after no one responded to her. It was impossible for her to smash this protective glass. Even though the material was a lot like glass, it was nothing like the glass she knew, because the material was so strong that there was no hope of breaking it.

"Come on! You could at least hang a banner around here to tell us, newcomers, what's going on outside!"

She wondered if her large mood swings even affected her body as she began to feel a little tired. She turned and walked toward the vast stretch of black land. However, she had only walked a few steps when she saw four or five more of those head-sized beetles. She swallowed her disgust and walked aimlessly for a short while. Suddenly, without any warning, she felt an uncomfortable sensation of gastric juice in her stomach. She began vomiting the very next second and expelled that little amount of half-digested food in her stomach.

At the same time, she felt more and more dispirited, as her steps got heavy-laden.

"Plop." Lin Sanjiu's entire body felt weak as she fell to the ground. The black soil on the ground landed on her body following the impact. Before she lost consciousness, she suddenly understood what the 'snow globe' was shielding those people from.

It was radiation.

Chapter 109: Lin Sanjiu Doesn't have Radiation Immunity

In terms of radiation immunity, Lin Sanjiu was no different from an ordinary person. From the time she arrived at Garden of Eden, it took less than ten minutes for her body functions to start failing.

One could only imagine how high the radiation level was for her body to reach such a critical condition within the span of ten minutes. Every fiber of muscle in her body wrung with pain; her body temperature spiked without warning, leaving her with a high fever and skin hot to the touch. Each time she turned her head, a tuft of hair fell off her head. Blood was dripping from her nose, ears, and mouth, but she didn't even notice.

Having Heat Resistance Adaptation and Overall Physical Enhancement did nothing to help her condition. Lin Sanjiu violently coughed up another mouthful of blood and fell unconscious.

She remembered that the duoluozhongs, the masterminds behind Oasis, were actually humans before they were sent to Hyperthermal Hell. They only became duoluozhongs because they couldn't develop Heat Resistance Adaptation.

Now, Lin Sanjiu found herself in the same situation because there was no way her body could develop Radiation Immunity. Lin Sanjiu did not know how long she had been unconscious. She slowly opened her eyes but they quickly closed again. As she felt her body shutting down, she understood one thing in her hazy mind: she would never develop radiation immunity.

Despite being on the verge of death, her body still sent a clear message to her brain: Lin Sanjiu will not gain this ability, not because her Potential Growth Value isn't high enough, but due to the natural limitations of her genetics.

Everyone had hundreds of DNA flaws, but she didn't know that hers would affect her so quickly. It was almost as if she could see Death drawing closer like when she was young, standing by her mother's bedside.

Lin Sanjiu wasn't afraid of death.

She was only worried that it would not be her end. She was afraid that even after she died, her corpse would eventually stand up unsteadily, using a radiated, mutated, ghoulish face to roam this totally unfamiliar world.

Her consciousness slipped through her fingers once again like a wet soap and she felt as if darkness was creeping towards her from behind, like a death sentence. The second before that darkness covered her eyes, she spotted a figure walking toward her through her blurred vision.

[If I were a female lead character in a novel, that person would come over to save me, right?]

She spent her last bit of energy joking with herself before she fainted again.

The person who drew closer to her was wearing something like a motorcycle helmet. The pair of eyes behind the glass visor of the helmet quickly evaluated the woman on the ground.

It was obvious to the person that Lin Sanjiu just arrived.

This was a highly irradiated world, yet the woman on the floor wasn't wearing any form of anti-radiation protection. She was even wearing a short and tight singlet which left large areas of her skin exposed to the radiation-laced air. Lin Sanjiu's death certainly held no meaning for anyone here in this world, much less for the person who approached her with his own agenda.

The stranger in a helmet crouched down to examine her body more closely. When he saw the bandage on her neck, his eyes suddenly lit up.

"I know you're not dead yet so I'm going to apologize first," the man suddenly mumbled. His voice was muffled because of his helmet. "Anyway, a dead person doesn't need any Special Items, right?"

While he spoke, he took off his glove and lifted Lin Sanjiu's chin. He pressed around her bandage and felt the solid surface of her Pygmalion Choker just as he expected.

The man wasn't in a hurry to retrieve that item, instead, he held her shoulders and flipped her, then he reached for her back pocket, trying to look for more items.

After a few seconds, he fell onto her body heavily with a "thud" drawing his last breath. Meanwhile, a sharp breath escaped Lin Sanjiu as the man's weight pressed down on her.

Due to the effects of [Versu Poison], blood oozed out from the pores of the man's face and body. Drops of blood rolled down the glass visor, dripping out of the helmet.

Two motionless bodies laid on the vast, open, charred land.

Both bodies were actually quite close to the glass globe—as Lin Sanjiu's body deteriorated quickly due to the radiation, she fell to the ground without walking far previously.

Within the glass globe, a few healthy looking, well-kempt people stopped when they saw the two bodies outside. They pointed and discussed something before they dispersed.

The only sound which remained in this quiet, desolate, blackened field was the soft whistling of a breeze. A few hideous, critters with the size of a human head crawled out from the ground and headed toward the two people. They crawled around impatiently and just as they were about to crawl closer, they suddenly heard the sound of someone taking a long, deep breath. Scared by this, they scurried underground very quickly.

This breath sounded parched and dry, as if the owner was injured

and her lungs were longing for the moisture from a refreshing breath. Lin Sanjiu finally opened her eyes. After a few seconds, she became aware that, despite her exhaustion, her body was feeling a little better. When she coughed after being choked by her own blood, she realized that she had stopped bleeding. Her body was still in pain, but her fever was subsiding.

Strangely, Lin Sanjiu knew that she did not develop radiation immunity.

[What's going on?] She thought hazily, feeling convinced that the reason she was pulled back from the jaws of Death was due to the dead man lying on her. She laid in the same spot for some time feeling her heart working its best to keep her alive, trying to pump a little energy back to her body. When she started getting back some movement in her hands, she struggled to get the man's backpack off his shoulders. As the opening of the backpack was not secured, a handful of red, shining, transparent balls rolled out from the backpack, falling to the ground. It was the same thing that the young man grabbed from the vending machine.

Lin Sanjiu held one of the small balls and squeezed the very squishy material in her hand. It turned into a card in less than a second.

[Anti-radiation Gummi Candy V2.0]

This is a tidbit developed by Garden of Eden Laboratories. Guaranteed without any 100% natural juice additives and Vitamin C. The chewable texture is like that of a rubber shoe and is impossible to bite through. On top of that, it maintains a sickly sweet taste that inferior sweets have. Eating this product will temporarily boost the user's resistance to radiation. As this isn't the newest version, it only lasts for about three days. The user has to consume the gummies at regular intervals, eating at least ten gummies each time.

Note: This chewing gum should only be used as a supplement.

For the best results, please use this product with other anti-radiation protection or measures.

Lin Sanjiu felt an unexpected burst of energy, she popped the small round gummi into her mouth after changing it back to its original form and desperately searched for the remaining gummies on the ground. Sweat quickly poured from her forehead. She was still trapped by the man's corpse and her body was so weak that she could only move one arm. Luckily, she managed to find seven to eight gummies and immediately stuffed them into her mouth.

Even though she did not consume the right dosage of ten gummies, a soothing feeling quickly extended from her abdomen to the rest of her body. The dizziness, headache and other symptoms were momentarily alleviated and she felt much better. She laid on the ground, panting, as she felt her blood vessels coursing with life again. Looking at the gray radioactive clouds in the sky, a drop of tear rolled down the corner of her eye.

After all, even as a person not afraid of death, she didn't want to die.

After gathering some strength back, Lin Sanjiu took a deep breath and pushed the corpse away from her. She slowly sat up and noticed the human-shaped bloodstain on the ground.

Lin Sanjiu soon discovered what saved her life before she ate those gummies.

The black helmet remained on the ground while the human head within it and its attached body disappeared. Lin Sanjiu held a card with the drawing of a dead man between her fingers. She started reading the words on the back of the card.

[Er Dao's Corpse]

Name: Er Dao

Species: Human

Status: Dead

Potential Growth Value: 152

Passive abilities: Advanced Radioresistance, Physical Enhancements, Eagle Eye, Body Modification

Active Abilities: Crazy Dog Dashing, Radiation Negation Blood Granules

Even though [Crazy Dog Dashing] sounded quite strange, it was really just a simple ability which boosted its user's speed. On the other hand, the other ability was something worth pondering about.

"Radiation Negation Blood Granules?" Lin Sanjiu blinked her eyes, trying to make sure that she was reading it right. Due to her exposure to radiation, her vision was still blurred. She couldn't resist tapping on the words to get more information.

[Radiation Negation Blood Granules]

Small granules will form within the blood of the ability holder and these granules will negate 60% of the radiation within the ability holder's body. [Advanced Radioresistance] would only reduce the radiation exposure from extremely high levels to a mid-level exposure. Long-term exposure to mid-levels of radiation would still be damaging to a human's body. These granules not only keep the ability holder healthy but can also be thrown at creatures who have mutated due to the radiation.

After nullifying up to 60% of the radiation in the target mutated creature (whatever it is), its strength would be reduced greatly. The effect of the granules can last for one day. This is indeed an ability which goes against the basic existing knowledge and paradigms in the field of biology.

"No wonder..." Lin Sanjiu suddenly understood what happened and felt a complex emotion while she looked at her arms which were covered in blood.

This man, called Er Dao, probably came over to scavenge some

items when he saw that she was about to die. Unfortunately, he touched Lin Sanjiu's skin and died because of her Versu Poison. Next, the drops of fresh blood from his body fell on her. This helped to nullify 60% of the radiation in her body...

Lin Sanjiu sat in a daze for a while before sighing and opening Er Dao's backpack.

Chapter 110: Lin Sanjiu, the Widow

There wasn't much in the backpack. Other than a saber, a white paper bag caught her eyes. When she opened it, she saw the familiar red sparkling glow. Apparently, it was more of those Anti-radiation Gummi Candy V2.0, and there were ten of them.

The effects of Er Dao's blood could only last for a day and the effects of the ten gummies could last for three days. To make things worse, Lin Sanjiu could only regain enough energy to move if she used them in combination. For her, that meant that she had to overcome her emotions and rematerialize Er Dao's corpse every day to draw blood from his body and then turn it back into a card...

When she converted items to cards, they would retain the particular state they were at during conversion. Thankfully, they were only exposed to the effects of time when she rematerializes them, otherwise, Lin Sanjiu wouldn't know what to do if the blood in Er Dao's corpse coagulated. Even so, she realized that she only had six days to find the next batch of gummies. She couldn't help feeling that her future was bleak.

Lin Sanjiu massaged her sore temples and turned the bag of gummies into a card. Then, she apologized softly to her [Er Dao's Corpse] card and kept both cards stored into her body. She felt rather helpless about the whole situation with the corpses. She wondered what [Tai Sui](#) she offended. Why in hell did she have to collect a corpse from each New World?

She saw a dirty, stainless steel thermos at the corner of the bag and basically wasted a card-changing quota because the description simply stated [Irradiated water]. Right beside the thermos, there were a few slices of disgusting-smelling jerky of some kind, wrapped in paper. As Lin Sanjiu still had quite a lot of fish meat she collected from the deep sea, they did not interest her. She dumped them back into the backpack and heard a 'thud'. She immediately reached and felt the bottom of the backpack and

found a hard, circular plate-like object hidden under the fabric.

[If he had to hide this, it is probably something valuable, right?]
With this in mind, Lin Sanjiu took an orange [Dog's Frisbee], which had a ring of small LED lights around it, out from the backpack.

[Dog's Frisbee]: No matter how far an owner throws this frisbee, a dog can always bring it back... Does anyone find that amazing? Why won't the dog lose its way? The answer lies in the frisbee!

Instructions: There is an area on the edge of the frisbee that is specifically designed for biting. When the user bites this, the corresponding LED lights on the frisbee will light up, pointing the user in the right direction to the "owner". The "owner" is actually a geographical marker. When the user holds the Frisbee in its mouth, the frisbee will direct the user back to the location where the geographical marker had been set. Once the user reaches that place, the LED lights will automatically switch off.

"Does that mean I'm the dog?"

Status: There is already a geographical marker set, please check the name of your geographical marker when you reach your destination.

"If you manage to find your geographical marker, what's the point of knowing its name?" Lin Sanjiu muttered as she tested the frisbee, holding it in her mouth using her teeth. Just as expected, a light on the left edge lit up. After she determined the direction, she took the frisbee out from her mouth and picked up the helmet on the ground.

Er Dao obviously knew that he had to hold a frisbee in his mouth, yet he chose to wear a helmet. Thus, It was easy to infer how important the helmet was to him. When Lin Sanjiu looked at the card in her hand, a faint smile appeared on her face.

[Ambition Helmet]: Inspired by MMOs, Locke Corp developed a

line "Defictionalized Armors", transforming a fictional game armors into reality. This helmet is one of the items in the [Ambition Armor Set]. Effects are doubled when the user wears the complete set.

Key features: The helmet stimulates the user's brain with Far-Infrared Rays. Increasing the rate of blood flow in the user's brain, the user will feel more alert and energetic.

Additional features: Reduce physical damage by 15%, includes thermographic vision, provides a small amount of radiation protection.

"Did they mix up the key features with the additional features?" Lin Sanjiu commented as she examined the interior of the helmet. Her arms trembled slightly as she lifted the helmet, even though it weighed less than 5 kg.

"What sort of shadowy technology does this use?" Lin Sanjiu grinned to herself, trying her best to ignore her fatigue.

She felt so uncomfortable after this short stretch of activities that she was forced to take a break. But her biggest problem wasn't the weak state of her body, which felt like she just recovered from some serious illness, her biggest problem was that she didn't know where to go next.

Logically speaking, if she wanted to get more gummies, she should actually turn back. But she did not see any visible entrance in that snow globe city and the residents didn't seem like they wanted to let her in. Even though Lin Sanjiu already prepared herself to accept that fact, she still tried knocking on the glass for quite awhile before she finally lowered her fists. She took one last look at the clean and beautiful city before she turned and walked away.

Thinking about it, she concluded that the people wouldn't open up their shelter so easily as it would compromise its ability to protect them from the radiation outside...

[If that is the case, how did Er Dao get those gummies if he was cut off from the snow globe city?] In the end, Lin Sanjiu took out the orange frisbee after contemplating for some time.

Although she did not know where the [Dog's Frisbee] would bring her, she decided to use it, as she was out of options. [If Er Dao set that location as a geographical marker, it should be important to him, right? Perhaps I can find some supplies there...]

Though there was no one miles away from her, Lin Sanjiu felt a sense of shame when she held the frisbee between her teeth. "Who thought of this sh*tty design..." she complained in a muffled voice.

As the last twilight peered over the horizon, the grey skies looked gloomier than before and her surroundings sunk into a few lifeless shades of grey. As Lin Sanjiu's body was still on the verge of total collapse, she had to rest every now and then after walking for a short distance. She only walked for about half an hour but sweat poured from her forehead profusely. Her legs felt so weak that they were barely holding her up. When she saw a partially damaged house nearby, she rushed over and sat on the steps at the doorway, panting heavily. There was only half a roof on the house, and the slanted roof had collapsed into the room below it. A small patch of wild grass was growing from the side of the walls. Lin Sanjiu stared at it but her discomfort pulled her attention away from it.

She wondered if she was gradually feeling more and more uncomfortable because she did not take the recommended 'dose' of ten gummies. After confirming the direction that the frisbee was pointing towards, she swapped the frisbee for the [Ambition Helmet]. Even though the helmet was quite heavy, she felt better just a few minutes after she wore it. She began to feel a little more energetic. There was a small button on the eye level of the helmet and Lin Sanjiu pressed it to test its function. Her vision immediately changed, as her surroundings were reduced to their general outlines and charted with yellows and blues. When she looked at her arm, it appeared red due to the heat from her body.

She had never tried using a thermographic scanner before so she couldn't help looking around inquisitively. She did not expect that her casual action would lead to her spotting a vague red silhouette crouching in a patch of grass nearby. She did not know how long it had been crouching near her. Lin Sanjiu quickly stepped away from the grass, switched off the thermographic scanner, and drew out Er Dao's saber. From the size of the creature, it definitely wasn't a human.

The creature probably sensed her movement so it leaped out from the black grass patch. The creature was a greyish white rodent which looked like a rat but it was the size of a five-year-old child. It was covered in white spots and had a hairless back. It flashed its red sinister eyes at Lin Sanjiu. The most gruesome part of this creature was the huge pustule, which bulged out from its back. Lin Sanjiu could see the fluid in the pustule, encased by the partially transparent, stretched, grayish skin of the creature. When she looked at it carefully, she could even see a smaller creature with a similar face within the fluid.

[Is this bloody creature pregnant?] Lin Sanjiu held back her disgust as she held her saber up.

"Don't kill it!" a voice came out from within the dilapidated house. She paused and backed away awkwardly. A fat man with a round face looked out from behind a broken wall. He rushed over toward her anxiously, waving his hands, "It is my pet! Don't touch it!"

Before Lin Sanjiu could react, the fat man whistled. The greyish white giant rodent hesitated for a second before it turned away from Lin Sanjiu and ran into the house. For a moment, Lin Sanjiu did not know if she should lament over the fact that she could not sense the creature even though it was so close to her or that someone would actually keep such an ugly creature as his pet.

In any case, it was good to avoid a battle. She slowly placed her arm down though she could still feel her muscles in her arm

pulsating. In the past, such an 'exertion' would have been nothing to her. The man seemed to sense her frailness and his tone became rougher, "What's wrong with you? How could you act so impulsively? These 'free-range chickens' are no longer found in the wild, how could you kill one just because you are hungry? Huh?"

He obviously wanted to continue berating her but he narrowed his eyes suddenly, "Wait, that helmet... It belongs to Er Dao, right?"

[Damn it!] Lin Sanjiu cursed in her heart.

The fat man looked at her suspiciously. Lin Sanjiu definitely appeared fishy—she was wearing someone else's helmet, holding that person's saber and her body was covered with blood... It wouldn't be surprising even if that fat man immediately attacked her.

While Lin Sanjiu held her [Tape Recorder] card tightly in her hands, the man suddenly slapped his thigh, "I know! You're Er Dao's woman, right?"

It is a Chinese astrology term, supposedly there is a Tai Sui for each year, where different deities will take on this 'role' each year, so if you Fan Tai Sui for that year, or your zodiac sign offends the deity for that year, you will have to appease it or have bad luck.

Chapter 111: Captured

Despite the continuous waves of exhaustion, Lin Sanjiu tried her best to keep up with the fat man, trudging through the patches of waist-high grass. This place had probably been a part of the city as she could still see the remnants of pedestrian pavements. However, it was evident that the place had been abandoned for a long time as the plants have already decimated most of the tiles on the ground.

As they walked, the grayish-white pet rat obediently followed behind the fat man. When it moved quickly, the fetus within the pustule on its back would wobble along with the moving fluid. Lin Sanjiu did not have the time to process her disgust because all her attention was drawn to what the fat man was saying, "When Er Dao told me about that, I thought he was joking! I can't believe someone like him would have an otherworldly lover who would come here to look for him... Cough, now I know he's telling the truth."

Lin Sanjiu felt an indescribable feeling when she heard that there was possibly a woman out there searching tirelessly for Er Dao. She found herself momentarily speechless, so she just said, "oh."

"But my main point is that Er Dao is just too inconsiderate. How could he let a woman walk around here by herself? That's too dangerous..." The fat man seemed a little angry as he shoved the grass in his path. "Sister-in-law, when we go back, make sure you lock all the windows and doors. I will go out and look for him."

Moments before, Lin Sanjiu had made up an excuse about being separated from Er Dao because of a dangerous situation. After thanking the fat man for offering help, she couldn't help secretly feeling relieved—it was, of course, impossible for that fat man to meet Er Dao, so she just needed to escape after finding some anti-radiation supplies. Furthermore, she managed to grasp some useful information between the lines of his words.

Firstly, the apocalyptic event in this world must have happened quite some time ago and definitely wasn't like the newly "created" Hyperthermal Hell.

It was apparent that the Posthumans who live outside the snow globe city were already accustomed to the way of life and had their own survival methods. For example, that disgusting huge rat was the main source of meat for the people there. Even though it is a species which mutated due to the radiation, it seemed to have a mild temperament and supposedly the texture of its meat was quite tender, just like a spring chicken, and thus it was called "free-range chicken".

From what the fat man said, Er Dao probably had his own shelter, so

it might even be possible that he had some anti-radiation supplies in his house.

The most important information she managed to glean from the man was that there were different batches of people sent to this world. As the Garden of Eden must have been around for some time, there were people who had been living here for different amounts of time, thus everyone had a different level of "familiarity" with this world. This might be Lin Sanjiu's first day, but for others, it might be their last few days in this world. That is to say, Lin Sanjiu could benefit from others' experience and the conveniences they left behind.

"Ah, what do I call you?" Lin Sanjiu asked the fat man with his hoarse voice.

The latter clapped his hands together and replied, "That's right. I haven't introduced myself. You can call me Yuzi. I'm Er Dao's old friend, we came here together from the previous world..."

They chatted as they walked for an hour. After wearing the helmet, Lin Sanjiu already felt much better. Besides, she didn't want a stranger to find out how weak she was now, so she gritted

her teeth and forced herself to walk.

When they finally reached Er Dao's dwelling place, a small three-story building, her tight-fitting singlet was already drenched with sweat.

The building was most likely a cheap motel in the past. She could vaguely make out the picture of a cutlery set and a bed on its black walls. There was also a red carpet in the main hall which stank of mildew.

"This place is quite big. We both live here. Er Dao lives on the second floor and I occupy the first floor," Yuzi said briefly and quickly chased the grayish white rat into a corridor. One of the guestrooms had already been converted into a rat's nest, and the huge rat entered it without any fuss.

After ensuring that his livestock was back in its room, Yuzi closed the door and smiled at Lin Sanjiu, "Are you hungry? Do you want food, I could make something... You can go upstairs to rest. When Er Dao comes back, I'll lecture him on your behalf."

The food and water in this world had already been contaminated with a high level of radiation. If Lin Sanjiu really ate anything, her body would immediately shut down, so she just shook her hand, refusing, "No, thanks for the offer. But I just need some rest... Where is his room?"

She was exhausted and she just wanted to quickly search Er Dao's room for supplies. Yuzi brought her to the second floor and opened the first door. He said a few words before turning to leave. However, he suddenly chuckled, "Sister-in-law, I haven't seen your face! Don't worry. This building is very safe, you don't have to keep that helmet on..."

Seeing his curious face, Lin Sanjiu hesitated for a moment before she took off her helmet. If she wanted to stay here until she gets her hands on some of those gummies, it would be too unnatural for her to keep wearing that helmet. She tidied her hair and kept her

composure while she looked straight at Yuzi while silently hoping that he had never seen Er Dao's lover before.

Yuzi's gaze paused for a few seconds on the flora design around her eyes, then he laughed, "That weird stuff around your eyes, it looks good! Alright, you should rest. I will look for him. Take care."

"Okay, thank you," Lin Sanjiu replied softly.

If she kept dragging herself around with this weak body, it was just a matter of time before she died. She knew that she needed to quickly find a way to deal with the radiation. As she walked into the room, Yuzi closed the door. She was a little stunned when she surveyed the room.

There was a large splatter of blood on the beige wallpaper. The bedsheet had been torn to shreds. There were a few pieces of broken wood planks on the floor and there was an overturned chair at the corner of the room...

[There is no way anyone would stay in this room...]

When Lin Sanjiu rushed toward the entrance and tried to open the door, she realized that she couldn't open it. In that instant, she forgot her physical discomfort because she could only taste the salty feeling of regret. She slid down to the ground with her back to the door as she let out a self-mocking laughter. If she wasn't so badly tortured by her body condition to the point where she couldn't think straight, she wouldn't have fallen so easily into that trap.

After she sat silently on the floor for some time, she asked quietly, "What do you want with me?"

As she did not hear Yuzi leaving, she was certain he was still outside observing the situation. There were a few seconds of silence outside the door and eventually she heard his voice, "You're very cool-headed."

Lin Sanjiu did not say a word. She tried to smash the lock and found that it had already been damaged quite badly before, however, the door did not budge. It was as if it was another wall. To make things worse, she was already starting to pant after just punching it a few times.

Yuzi waited for a few seconds outside and when he discovered that her resistance was only to that extent, he immediately laughed out and uttered, "Stop wasting your energy." Then, she heard his footsteps going downstairs.

When she heard that he had walked away, Lin Sanjiu slunk over to the bed and lay down. Every skin, muscle, and bone in her body was aching.

With the current state of her body, Lin Sanjiu knew there was nothing she could do so she basically went to rest like she planned. She felt a sudden dizziness so she pinched herself to keep herself from fainting. While she tried to regain her strength, she listened carefully to the sounds outside the door. She did not know how many hours have passed but she only heard Yuzi's voice when stars started appearing in the dark blue sky outside the window.

He seemed to be talking to someone else.

"The quality is superior, you don't have to worry..." As he spoke, she could hear multiple footsteps heading upwards. There was definitely more than one person on the stairs. "I saw her face. She is quite beautiful and there is some flora design around her eyes..."

"Flora designs? Are those tattoos?" She heard another man clicking his tongue in disapproval, "If they cover most of her face, there is no way I am going to offer you a high price."

"Of course not!" Yuzi explained anxiously. He held something in his hand and waved it past the door. The door responded to the item and opened. "You can go in and see for yourself."

A tall, bald, muscular man threw a side glance at him and let out

a contemptuous laughter, "How many times have you done this? Yet, you never dare enter first?"

Yuzi lowered his head, "Hehe. I'm just being careful. As you know, you are definitely better than me at fighting."

The bald man didn't say much. He pressed his waist and his whole body glowed faintly for a moment. Very quickly, the glow faded and it was as if that never happened.

Once he entered the room, he frowned. Anyone with common sense could tell that his preparation was for naught. It was obvious that the woman standing at the corner of the room was extremely weak.

As she was wearing a helmet, he could not see her face. She was sweating profusely even though it was only slightly above 20 degrees and she was armed with a long weird weapon. He could see that her body was quivering and was definitely unwell. The bald man gave Yuzi a dissatisfied glare.

"Is this the woman? She's sick?" the man examined Lin Sanjiu from head to toe as if he was checking a merchandise. When he saw her placing her hand on an outdated voice recorder, he didn't think much about it, "I can't even see her face. This is a waste of my time!"

Yuzi was anxious when he heard this and quickly quipped, "She is not sick. Maybe her Potential Growth Value is a little low..."

Before he finished his sentence, a man's voice rang out from the voice recorder. "What about a sharp blade? An ability to summon a sharp..."

Before Yuzi could react, the bald man kicked Yuzi to the ground with a lightning speed. Next, the voice recorder flew into his palms as if it had eyes. The voice instantaneously stopped. Lin Sanjiu's Pygmalion Choker activation was halted before it could even grow warm.

It was only at that point that the bald brute looked at the voice recorder with amazement. He looked at Lin Sanjiu and there was certainly excitement in his serious voice when he exclaimed, "I really can't tell. But you must have some fight in you. You even managed to activate my 'Crisis Awareness'!"

Chapter 112: Where Will She Be Sent?

In the Garden of Eden, women were valuable commodities.

This was the conclusion Lin Sanjiu got from what Yuzi said as someone violently pulled her helmet off her head. She could feel the sharp pangs of pain from her knee. Luckily, the bald muscular man probably held himself back, so her kneecap was still intact.

This was the first time that Lin Sanjiu had no strength to defend herself. She fell to the ground as her muscles pulsed with pain. While the bald man held the helmet in his hands, Yuzi's eyes immediately followed the item. Yuzi laughed ingratiatingly, "Regarding that helmet, we already agreed..."

"I know. It's yours. It won't go anywhere."

Despite saying that, the bald man continued holding the helmet. Yuzi did not dare to provoke him and he was in no hurry. The man looked at Lin Sanjiu's face carefully for a while as if judging a furniture.

"Her facial features are not bad but she has an off-putting temperament," he nitpicked. "Look at that short and messy hair. She doesn't look gentle at all. It is better for women to be pretty and delicate..."

"Brother Sandwhale, the makeup artist can cover up those small flaws. Don't you agree?" Yuzi said eagerly, laughing.

Sandwhale seemed to agree as he nodded and lifted Lin Sanjiu's chin. He looked at her right and left profile before he changed his tone suddenly, "But that's not the main issue! I can't believe you didn't tell me this beforehand."

Lin Sanjiu heart pounded rapidly. She couldn't wait for that man to just quickly drop down and die.

Unfortunately, things did not play out as she hoped. For some reason, the Versu Poison on her body did no harm to the bald man.

It had already been ten seconds, but Sandwhale was still haggling with Yuzi, "This woman's Potential Growth Value is too low. That's why her radiation resistance is so pathetic. Look at her. I don't even need to do anything and she is already this weak. If she is so weak, how can we use her?"

[Use? What are they trying to do?] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself furiously.

After the voice recorder was taken from her and she struggled for a bit, she lost the little energy she previously saved, which was barely enough to keep her moving. Right now, even breathing felt difficult for her. [So, when the description mentioned 10 Anti-radiation Gummi Candy V2.0, you really couldn't miss even one.]

Though she had converted Er Dao's backpack and those gummies into cards and stored them into her body, there was no chance for her to eat them. Sandwhale had already pressed her to the ground swiftly and tied her hands at her back, as if he had done that action many times before.

Yuzi was only a little worried before, but when he saw Sandwhale's action, his face turned red with anger, "Brother Sandwhale, you must be joking. Once we enter Garden of Eden, this won't be a problem..."

Sandwhale gave him a dismissive look but did not stop. He stuffed a black sponge into Lin Sanjiu's mouth while he retorted, "This won't be a problem? I still have to feed her Anti-radiation Gummies, right? Who knows how many doses she will need before her turn? Moreover, if the radiation in her body is already too high, I will be making a loss."

"Brother Sandwhale, just state your offer. I mean, we have been working together..."

"60%, just like the previous deal. Take it or leave it?" Sandwhale grinned and continued, "And don't forget, you want this helmet..."

The black sponge in Lin Sanjiu's mouth was wet and tasted bitter. When Lin Sanjiu realized that the sponge had been soaked in anesthetic, it was already too late. Her vision started to blur. Even though she strongly refused to accept the situation as it was, she couldn't help shutting her eyes. Before she lost consciousness, the last line she heard was: "I will put her with the others and we can send them all to Garden of Eden tomorrow..."

[Garden of Eden.]

These three words were carved so deeply in her mind that they were the first thing she thought of when she regained consciousness.

Unfortunately, what she saw when she opened her eyes was entirely different from the image that the three words would normally invoke.

She was in an extremely large room, in which the very thin walls and floor were made of the same homogeneous green material that was neither metal nor wood. It was probably dawn as the room was flooded with an ashen white light. The window in the room was so high that it was nearly touching the ceiling and it made her feel like she was in a prison.

There was a row of large capsules under the window. The capsules were at least two meters tall, and were placed in an upright position. The top half portion of the capsule was transparent and the bottom half was black. Each capsule also had a small door.

A few unconscious women were laid haphazardly on the ground in front of the capsule, thrown there like lambs to the slaughter. Their eyes were shut but they were clearly breathing. When Lin Sanjiu looked around, she could tell that there were at least ten women around her. Some of them, like her, were starting to rouse, while others were still fast asleep. Notably, all of them, including herself, had their hands and legs tightly bounded and sponges in

their mouths.

A fair-skinned girl with long hair caught her eyes. She had blunt bangs and her raven black hair flowed over her snow-white shoulders, creating a beautiful contrast. Her looks should be considered aesthetically pleasing but with her twisted expression of fear accompanied with her bloodshot eyes and her face covered in sweat, saliva, and mucus from crying, it was simply unsightly.

People who could survive in Garden of Eden were certainly not fresh newbies experiencing their first New World. The fact that the girl was so frightened meant that she definitely knew something. With much effort, Lin Sanjiu propped herself up with her shoulders and with a thud, flipped herself closer to the girl.

The girl's body jerked backward in extreme fear before looking at her, quivering.

Unexpectedly, Lin Sanjiu felt a nauseating sense of weakness coming from the core of her body after executing that simple maneuver. Everything turned black and she couldn't see anything even after a few minutes.

For an instant, she felt her pores flaring. After quite some time, her sight gradually returned. Lin Sanjiu looked down at her chest and noticed that Er Dao's blood had already dried up. They formed crusty patches on her skin, which fell as she moved. It had been more than a day and Er Dao's blood was no longer effective.

Before Lin Sanjiu could get over the previous horror of losing her sight, she found herself once again at the doors of Death. She instantly lost her motivation to get more information from the girl. She did not dare to move her body even an inch and momentarily couldn't think about any way of saving herself. The only thing better about her current situation now was that she had eaten nine anti-radiation gummies. Because of that, her body could still last for a while.

A few other women began to stir from their stupor, perhaps

shocked by the 'thud' that Lin Sanjiu created. Within a few short minutes, the room was filled with a continuous muffle of noise.

"Yo, I think most of them are awake..." a slick-sounding man's voice came from outside the door, clearly approaching them.

"Be a bit more gentle, understand?" Sandwhale yelled out with his grating voice. Following which, the women heard the clanking sounds of locks from the door. A group of men pushed open the doors and light flooded through the doors.

Sandwhale strode into the room first, and frowned without turning to the men behind him. "Do what you are suppose to do. Don't just f*ck around!" he commanded.

There were five men behind him and they leered lustily at the women on the ground without any restraint. A skinny man among the group rubbed his hands together before he casually pinched the waist of a woman lying near his feet, "Brother Sandwhale, it is such a pity to send them over without even touching them..."

Sandwhale spat and replied, "I have no idea what abilities these women have. If you do, then go ahead."

The five men fell silent. Gender does not play a role in determining people's Evolved Abilities, unlike how women are naturally physically weaker than men. If the men carelessly untied those women, no one could predict the outcome if they fought back.

The eyes of the skinny man, who was still groping the woman by his feet, lit up, "Brother Sandwhale, didn't you mention that one of the women has very poor resistance to radiation? If we played with her, it should be safe, right?"

Lin Sanjiu froze. While her intense killing intent rose, she couldn't help looking forward to the moment that man touched her skin. Surprisingly, Sandwhale said something that Lin Sanjiu didn't anticipate, "That woman's body is poisoned. You will die if

you touch her, you can try."

The skinny man was visibly disappointed when he heard that. Talking about Lin Sanjiu, Sandwhale looked down at her and couldn't help cursing, "Damn it! I know I shouldn't have bought her... I can't believe she is f*cking bleeding."

Lin Sanjiu only felt a slight itch under her nose when she heard his words, realizing that blood was indeed pouring from her nose. While Sandwhale ranted, he grabbed a handful of gummies from a small bag before cautiously counting ten precious gummies. He lifted his chin and jammed them into her mouth.

Sandwhale smirked when he noticed her expression, "I don't know what you have on your body, but with my activated protection, your poison is useless against me."

As the gummies reached her stomach, Lin Sanjiu quickly felt much better.

Sandwhale dusted his hands and stood up. He looked to his men and ordered, "Package them. We are sending the goods out now."

Before the women started wailing, the group of men rushed over and hauled each of them like hogs, dragging them by their legs. Each woman was thrown into a capsule. As Lin Sanjiu had poison on her, none of the men dared to touch her. In the end, Sandwhale gripped her arms and stuffed her into a capsule.

There were two wheels on the bottom of the capsules and when a person held the handles of the capsules from the front, the large capsules could be moved like hand trucks. In that manner, the women were wheeled out of the room.

Despite the sounds of sobbing from the women within the capsules and the noise of their bodies hitting against the walls of the capsule... the ten pair of wheels continued forward without hesitation.

Sunlight reflected off Lin Sanjiu's amber eyes, but all she saw was

the gray skies and the gloomy surroundings of the same shade. The men walked with the capsules for some time before Lin Sanjiu finally heard the sounds of the people receiving them. Lin Sanjiu couldn't resist stretching her neck out to look at the fate that awaited her.

In the distance, she spotted the cleanest and most beautiful city she had ever seen in her life.

Chapter 113: Lunar New Year Festivities and It's None of Your Business

"Woohoo!"

A spell of explosive enthusiastic cheers rang out from the huge screen on the wall. Using some sort of technology, each of the listeners heard a realistic surround sound which made them feel as if they were really beside a crowd which was celebrating crazily.

Colors burst forth from the dark blue screen, basking the surroundings in dazzling hues, while spotlights of all colors swayed over the pale faces shown on the screen.

Lin Sanjiu was sitting on a high chair and her body was as stiff as a board. She couldn't move at all because her body had been tied tightly to the back of the chair with a black leather rope. The other women, who were brought to this place with her, were also in the same sitting posture. Even though their gags have been removed from their mouths, none of them said a word.

"Hello! Garden of Eden residents!"

A petite and sweet-looking female host appeared on the screen. She was wearing a tight-fitting white dress and was smiling with her pouty red lips. "Once again, it is time for our Lunar New Year Specials! Don't you feel that everyone gets especially excited during this time!"

"Of course!" A male host appeared on the screen, walking in from the opposite side. He answered her with a clearly extremely scripted reply, "Apart from delicious food and fireworks, and visiting our families and friends, for us here in Garden of Eden, the highlight for this entire month is about to start!"

"This year, we're so lucky! For this grand occasion, we managed to invite various famous experts from the Garden of Eden to give their analyses and opinions..."

In contrast to the on-screen festive atmosphere which seethed with enthusiasm, there was a deafening silence in the room where the women were held. The only sounds in the room were the rustling noise of the staff members' clothes as they worked.

Just then, a makeup brush covered with powder swept across Lin Sanjiu's cheeks a few times. "Raise your eyes and look upwards," a young woman spoke.

Lin Sanjiu gave a sidelong glance at the makeup artist beside her and did nothing.

"Oh really. If you want to throw a tantrum, choose the right time!" The young female makeup artist with cropped hair was extremely unhappy but there was nothing she could do. The makeup artist, who was wearing rubber gloves, could only unwillingly wipe away the concealer which covered the flora design under Lin Sanjiu's eyes.

The hair stylist fixing Lin Sanjiu's hair suddenly spoke, "I heard that this one is crabby. Don't waste your time on her. Oh, isn't he the guy that became famous after the previous competition?"

"Yes! I like him, I've got to watch this segment." The makeup artist paused and turned to look at the screen behind them.

"You can watch while you do her makeup. Don't let it delay your work," the other hair stylist advised as she continued adding hair extensions to Lin Sanjiu's hair. With her skillful hands, she had already converted half of Lin Sanjiu's short hair into loose waist length braids by adding hair extensions.

The person that they were discussing about was a gruff well-built man who was wearing only an odd-looking brief, showing his muscular body. The man looked at the camera and flashed a smile.

Just when she thought that there was something suspicious about the man, Lin Sanjiu suddenly heard a soft chattering sound. She turned to look behind her and noticed that the fair-skinned

girl was staring hard at the television screen. The girl's teeth were chattering non-stop.

[Does she know this person?] Lin Sanjiu guessed when she saw the color drained from the girl's face. Even at this point in time, Lin Sanjiu was still very confused about her whole situation. She never thought that she would actually be sent to the snow globe city.

Yesterday morning, she was brought into the city in a capsule along with the other women. Lin Sanjiu had previously assumed that the snow globe city was cut off from the outside world. But when they arrived yesterday, she realized that she was wrong.

Through the glass walls, she saw that there was a distinct area used for receiving the capsules from the outside world. Within that large area, there were no normal pedestrians and only decontamination facility built with heavy lead to block radiation. The staff working there were all wearing anti-radiation hazmat suits, which left no skin exposed. The faces behind the helmets revealed no emotions as they examined the capsules one by one.

The capsules which have been exposed to the radiation outside were immediately sprayed with a large quantity of transparent fluid once they entered the decontamination facility. White fumes spewed forth with the fluid, as the capsules were thoroughly rinsed. After that, the staff wearing hazmat suits walked over to the capsules and dragged out the women. Shortly after, the women were treated in the same way.

After she was totally drenched with the cold fluid, Lin Sanjiu actually felt a little better. Once she found herself inside the snow globe city, under the protection of the glass walls and sprayed by that unknown fluid, she immediately felt the effects of the radiation on her body wearing off. Like rain after a long drought, she could feel her body recovering as she inhaled deeply.

She was gradually regaining her stamina and strength but she did

not attempt to do anything rash. Firstly, there were fully armed soldiers surrounding and glaring at them. Secondly, she wanted to know what this snow globe city intended to do with all these women, including herself.

After the whole decontamination process, the women were pushed back into the capsules just as before. Then, they were sent to a room with a few large TV screens. Afterwards, teams of makeup artists and hair stylists came into the room one after the other. They set up all kinds of weird makeup equipment and started working on the women.

During this time, some of the women tried pleading while others tried to resist. However, the ropes that tied them were Special Items which limited their strength. Furthermore, Sandwhale and his gang were still there, walking behind the soldiers and monitoring each woman.

A buxomy woman struggled so hard in her seat that she fell to the ground. When that happened, one of the soldiers rushed over and pressed an electric baton to her abdomen. That baton was certainly different from the low-wattage police baton that Lin Sanjiu used previously. After violent convulsions racked the woman's body for some time, the room was filled with a stench of incontinence.

After she was dragged away, none of the remaining women made a sound.

[What do these people want with me?] This was the question which was in each of the women's minds. After the makeup on their faces were close to perfection and their hairs were styled to look more and more beautiful, this sense of uncertainty, that hung like a gray cloud, grew even heavier.

Light from the TV screens bounced off the faces of the women as another skinny chap commented with narrowed eyes, "This is why I think that we have to pay close attention to the contestant's face when they find out what the competition is about. That's worth

analyzing..."

The sexy female host suddenly smiled, "That seems like a very popular view. When I place my bets this time, I will definitely listen to Mr. Fang's analysis..."

[What the competition is about? Are we the contestants?] Lin Sanjiu was starting to worry when the door abruptly opened. Someone yelled anxiously, "You guys will be up in 15 mins. Quick! Get ready!"

The person that was shouting was wearing very thick makeup, and he actually used a light pink foundation. If he was not yelling, there was no way Lin Sanjiu could tell his gender. He scanned the room and snapped, "HURRY UP!" before he closed the door with a slam.

The people in the room suddenly became more anxious. The makeup artist who was dealing with Lin Sanjiu completed her eye makeup quickly while the hair stylist gave Lin Sanjiu one final look and adjusted her hair before turning to her colleague and asking grumpily, "How did the makeup turn out like this..."

The makeup artist rolled her eyes, "She already looked like that. There is not much I can do."

"But she won't be very popular with this style."

"Cough, it is not really my business, is it?" The makeup artist laughed and kept her equipment before leaving. "No matter how much is bet on her, none of that will go to me. Oh, we should remove this bandage."

When Lin Sanjiu confirmed that she was really a contestant, the makeup artist was already reaching for her neck.

Her Pygmalion Choker was right under the bandages and there was no way she wanted that to be revealed. Lin Sanjiu turned her head sharply, pushing away the young woman's hand before glaring at her coldly.

The two of them froze, looking at each other for a considerable amount of time. Lin Sanjiu finally muttered mildly, "I'm hurt. I won't look good without the bandage."

The other party rolled their eyes again and ignored her after that. By then, most of the others had also had their makeup and hair done. When the makeup team was about to leave, the pink-faced man rushed in again. He gestured to the people behind him, "Quick! Quick! Come in and shoot!"

A dozen small video cameras which were dangling in mid-air flew into the room, over the heads of the makeup artists. They were followed by two other men who were controlling the cameras with some sort of equipment. Each woman was surrounded by three to four video cameras.

Whilst everyone was bewildered by that sudden intrusion, they all heard the female host's voice on the TV screen, "Since we have heard the pre-competition opinions, we will introduce the contestants in the next segment. Anyway, the majority of our contestants have appeared previously. Compared to yesterday, there are not as many competitors today. According to sources, there are nine of them today. Backstage, are you guys ready?"

[Nine? What happened to that buxomy woman?]

Lin Sanjiu's thoughts were interrupted by the beaming pink-faced man who appeared on the screen. He was standing in front of one of the small cameras as he replied loudly, "All the contestants are in position!"

Next, a familiar pale face appeared on the TV screen.

Lin Sanjiu was a little stunned when she saw the face on the screen. She turned to look at the black-haired, fair-skinned girl beside her who had been crying all along.

[Yup, she was still her. The only difference is the makeup on her face.]

The girl's makeup artist had obviously captured the girl's primary "charm". The makeup artist painted the girl's face white so that her cheeks lacked even a tint of healthy pink. To add to that effect, the girl's eyes and the tip of her nose was purposely given a faint reddish highlight. Her black eyelashes were also pressed down, so that they hung over her eyes drawing attention to the tears in the girl's eyes. This combination made the girl look like a frightened little bird.

"This is Contestant 92. Isn't she lovely!" the pink-faced man's voice rang out in the room and from the TV screen. He leaned close to the girl and took a deep breath before asking with a smile, "What is your name?"

The girl's teeth were still chattering, so she couldn't answer.

"Ah, she seems quite timid. Her personality makes her look pitiful!" The pink-faced man was unfazed, as if he was already used to such circumstances. He waved his hand and said, "Let's take a look at some comments from our audience!"

As he gestured to the side, the screen was divided into a few split screens. The female host and the pink-faced man each had one small corner, the black-haired girl took the center screen. Meanwhile, numerous comments appeared above the center screen.

<Ahhh! She is so cute! She is just my type!>

<She can't even say a word! We don't even need to be afraid of her!>

<We need a name! Why don't we call her 'Chatterer'!!!!>

<Is it because of her chattering teeth?!!>

Lin Sanjiu was dumbfounded when she saw the screen, her eyes quickly swept through the scrolling text comments.

The voice of the pink-faced man broke her attention as he asked again, "Hey, Contestant 92, what did you say? Could you speak a

little louder so that our audience can hear you?"

A quivery voice escaped from the screen, "[My, my name is Chuyan.](#)"

Her tears fell as she spoke and suddenly the number of comments exploded, almost covering the entire screen.

<My heart is breaking just seeing that face with her name.>

<I've already placed my bet!>

<I wish I could have her for a night!>

The pink-faced man seemed very pleased with the reaction from the audience. He left Chu Yan and walked over to another woman with short brown hair. One of the cameras flew upwards and shot down from above. The top view of the woman's ample breast was immediately shown on the screen. Though there were slightly fewer comments, she still generated great responses from the audience.

As each of them was only given one to two minutes of screen time, five people in the room were quickly introduced. Lin Sanjiu had to admit that the makeup artist and hair stylists were quite skilled. Even though the women had stiff and apprehensive expressions, they were all alluring with their own charming, sexy or innocent appeal.

After the pink-faced man had introduced Contestant 96, he looked at Lin Sanjiu and walked over to her. As the cameras turned, Lin Sanjiu's face was now on the television screen. Previously, there were comments like, "I don't want to see that pinked-face sissy! Show us the next contestant!" But then, the comments stopped.

Everyone inside the city, within the protection of the snow globe, had their eyes glued to their screens. When Lin Sanjiu's face appeared, it was as if everyone had been doused by cold water. Mysteriously, all that previous excitement and enthusiasm faded.

She did not show a single hint of fear or uncertainty on her honey-bronze skin. When the audience looked at her face, they saw neither her long hair nor her red lips. They only noticed her cold, threatening eyes which seemed as though they could cruelly pierce anyone who was looking at their screens—it was as if they were not looking at a woman but just something that was wearing the skin of a woman. They had the impression that they were looking at a huge ancient beast which resonated an aura of authority.

This Lunar New Year Fighting Tournament had been around for 27 years in the Garden of Eden, and never before had a female contestant raised her chin that high.

After some time, a few comments finally appeared.

<What the hell. Next, please! I feel stressed from just looking at her.>

<I feel uncomfortable just looking at this type of women who are so full of themselves.>

<I don't even want to watch her.>

After four of five comments scrolled across the screen, the room fell silent. Trying to prevent the atmosphere from going cold, the pink-faced man quickly asked, "Contestant 97, what is your name?"

Lin Sanjiu shot a glance at his face while her eyes remained stoic. "It's none of your business."

The girl's full name is Hui Chuyan, which literally translates to swallow returning to Chu (state). I am assuming it is a pitiful name as the state of Chu was destroyed during the Warring States Period.

Chapter 114: 97 Needs to be Taught a Lesson!

"Contestant 97, what is your name?"

"It's none of your business."

After that aloof woman said those words, the screen turned black. A few people familiar with tournament started pointing to the TV screen, "It's unavoidable. There will always be a few who won't cooperate. They will be taken aside and be taught a lesson."

"Ohhh." Quite a few people in the bar seemed enlightened by that comment.

"The way that Contestant 97 acted! She really needs to be taught a lesson..." someone in the bar commented softly with a drunken breath.

"F*ck! She thinks she is so great. I f*cking hate those Posthumans," another random commenter added. Rows of robotics arms hanging from the ceiling delivered the drinks to their customers, while there were multiple troughs above the machine holding all sorts of alcohol. One of the robotic hands delivered a glass of blue cocktail to a man. He took the glass but did not drink it. Instead, he turned to the 'expert' from before and asked, "How do they teach them a lesson?"

"Hehehe. There are lots of ways. It all depends on the mood of the human trafficker." The 'expert' was a middle-aged man. He took a gulp from the bottle of wine in his hand and continued, "Just wait and see. The woman will appear on the screen again. By then, she will be so obedient that she will say anything they want her to say."

He placed the bottle down, as light reflected off the silver band on his ring finger. The person who was holding the blue cocktail was dressed in a hooded robe so others couldn't really see his

appearance. His gaze hovered for a few seconds on the middle-aged man's hand. He said nothing and simply looked back to the large TV screen.

As if to prove that the middle-aged man was right, the pink-faced host grinned widely with his pale yellow lips, "We're sorry. Contestant 97 was a little nervous because she wasn't well prepared. We will let her take a break and relax for while. Let's take a look at Contestant 98... Ah, it is a sweet little lady. How old are you?"

The hooded man took a sip of his cocktail as he listened with little interest to the girl's reply: "Fourteen."

When everyone in the Garden of Eden was cheering for the young contestant, Lin Sanjiu's hair was being pulled by Sandwhale just as the middle-aged man had predicted. Sandwhale pulled Lin Sanjiu, who was still tied to the tall chair, into another room.

"Bang!" He slammed the door shut. Meanwhile, Lin Sanjiu fell heavily to the ground along with her chair. Sandwhale looked at her and let out a cold laugh.

"You think you're so f*cking great?" Ice dripped from his words, as he spoke in a cold-blooded manner, "Did I mention this to you before? People who offend me always end up with terrible fates..."

Sandwhale's pupils narrowed dangerously as his anger flared, "Count yourself lucky that your face was already on TV and they've given you a number. Otherwise, I would've chopped off your arms and legs... What should I do with you now?" he uttered as he strode towards Lin Sanjiu.

Unexpectedly, the woman on the ground showed no fear.

Though she was tied, Lin Sanjiu used her palm to turn her wrist. When she felt her fingers on the rope, she flashed a faint smile at Sandwhale, "Have you heard of Route 300?"

He was momentarily stunned and couldn't react in time.

Sandwhale's eyes almost popped from their sockets the next second because he saw the woman standing up and dusting her pants calmly. The black rope which bound her had disappeared. He stared foolishly at the floor and took a step back.

"Are you looking for this?" Lin Sanjiu waved the card in her hand.

That was a white card with squiggly smudges. There was a childlike drawing of a black rope, which looked like a meaningless mess of black squiggles and there were a few small words below.

"I have to thank you for letting me get this," she smugly said as she scanned the card in her hand.

[ANTI Posthumans Collection: Female Slave Bondage Rope]

Description: This is a product from Garden of Eden Laboratories. This product neutralizes the effect of the "Physical Enhancements" that Posthumans have so that they only have the strength of normal humans. The rope is made of a special soft alloy metal with the tensile strength of two tons. The inventor added a layer of black leather due to his special preference.

"So that's the reason. Even without all that radiation damage, I still couldn't make the rope budge no matter how hard I struggled..." Lin Sanjiu showed a silent smile, "You're Sandwhale, right? Now, shouldn't you tell me what this tournament is about?"

Sandwhale gave her a grim expression and silently reached for the button on his waist. However, he was shocked to find that nothing happened to his body even after he pressed the button. Just when his heart missed a beat, a shadow flashed before his eyes. Suddenly, it felt as if his chest had been rammed by a huge pillar. "Crack..." a series of bone-cracking noise rang out as an unknown number of his rib bones broke.

Lin Sanjiu drew back her feet. She watched expressionlessly as Sandwhale held his chest and fell to the ground. There was utter

disbelief on his face.

That instant she kicked him to the ground, she suddenly realized the significance of the words, "Growth type".

Sandwhale had probably gone through multiple New Worlds, so both his Passive and Active abilities would definitely have levelled up more than once. But a single attack from Lin Sanjiu could actually cause such damage to him and the reason for this...

If a normal person's stats was valued at 1, a Posthuman's stats would be 2 when they first get the Physical Enhancement ability. Considering the number of level-ups she had undergone, Lin Sanjiu's stats should be at 2.5.

Normally, most Posthumans would have to slowly raise this stats from 2 to 3 with each level up. If Sandwhale had leveled up 4 times, his stats would be at 5. Under normal circumstances, Lin Sanjiu should not pose a threat to him if she was at a 2.5 level. Unfortunately for him, she was a Growth type.

After struggling through all sorts of dangers, her will to survive would push her body to adapt, and her "Overall Physical Enhancement" ability helped her body grow stronger each day, even without leveling up. Her muscles were slowly growing tougher, her bones harder and her physical strength was rising...

The damage from the radiation concealed these changes. Lin Sanjiu only felt her new strength and vigor when she entered the snow globe city. Sandwhale definitely didn't know the reasons for this turn of events. He was astonished when he coughed out a mouthful of blood but gritted his teeth and jumped up when he saw that she was heading his way.

Without saying a word, Lin Sanjiu whipped out her mouthpart weapon. Its sharp teeth whistled as she waved it towards his chest. She was shocked when her opponent's chest exploded with a bang and sand burst out forth as she thrust the mouthpart through the sand.

When she pulled her weapon back, the sand turned back to flesh and blood. Sandwhale did not take any damage from that attack.

"No matter what weapon you use, there is no way you can hurt me." Sandwhale spat. "You managed to land your attack only because I didn't react fast enough the first time..."

He clearly proved that he was not bluffing when Lin Sanjiu followed up with a series of attacks. No matter where she aimed, his body would turn to sand, rendering her attack useless.

"Haha! So this is your best attack?" Sandwhale glared at her with vicious eyes, "It's my turn now, b*tch!"

Before he finished his sentence, his arms turned to sand and a sandstorm headed in Lin Sanjiu's direction. Since each grain of sand held an incredible amount of compressed energy, it would cause immeasurable damage if one was hit by that sandstorm attack. The most dangerous component of his attack was the fact that it was very difficult to dodge such a sandstorm.

Sandwhale had killed many people with this attack—when they were alive, they all looked different but when they died they all looked the same. They all became a twisted pile of bloodied human mush.

Ignoring the possible backlash from the organizers, the irate Sandwhale only had one thing in his mind, he wanted to see Lin Sanjiu become that same human mush.

Lin Sanjiu was indeed forced into a dangerous position. Using her naturally physical strength and speed, she ran and dodged, barely avoiding the sandstorms. However, the room was too small and she quickly found that she didn't have enough space to evade that attack forever. She knew that she wouldn't survive if the sand hit her. Cold sweat appeared on her forehead as she scanned the room and made a critical decision. She jumped up and headed towards Sandwhale.

[Does she think that I would stop just because she leads the sandstorm towards me?] Sandwhale immediately understood her intentions and laughed.

"Hahaha! Are you stupid? If my hands can become sand, so can my body!"

His resounding laughter filled the room while his chest turned into a pile of sand and another sandstorm headed toward her. With sandstorms heading toward her from two directions, she found herself in an even more dangerous situation.

With the situation at hand, there was no chance the woman would survive with two sandstorms heading her way.

...

"Oh! The noise from the room is rather loud!"

After introducing the remaining contestant, the pink-faced man who was waiting for Lin Sanjiu commented a little excited. The screen was back on the female host and he was feeling a little bored. He took out a yellow lipstick and started touching up his makeup. Doing this, he smiled and said, "I hope your boss holds himself back a little. She wouldn't look good on TV with a messed up face."

"Cough. You guys from Garden of Eden can't be afraid of that, right?"

"No, we aren't afraid of that. But if she doesn't look fine now, the contrast later wouldn't be as obvious..."

Before he could finish his sentence, the room suddenly became silent.

[Is it over?]

Sandwhale's lackeys, the soldiers with weapons, and the eight fearful and worried-looking women all turned to look at the door of the small room. A few cameras flew to the front of the door, as

their controllers aimed the cameras at the door.

The female host seemed to realized the commotion in the room. She gave a quick explanation to the audience and the screen transited to show the door of that changing room.

The entire Garden of Eden waited eagerly for Contestant 97 to show herself again. After some time, the door finally opened.

A pair of bloodied legs appeared from behind the door. Lin Sanjiu's combat pants had been reduced to strips of clothes which hung over her legs. Yet, the large patches of wounds on her legs obstinately obvious. On the other hand, her upper body and face was totally fine.

Everyone's focus wasn't on her indifferent and aloof face which hadn't changed from before, but on the fact that she could walk out of the room by herself.

The small cameras froze in the air. While everyone looked at her in shock, not making a single sound, Lin Sanjiu smiled. Then, she dragged something out from behind the door and threw it on the ground.

That was Sandwhale's corpse. It lacked a huge chunk of flesh in the chest area and both arms.

When the soldiers with weapons quickly surrounded her, Lin Sanjiu smiled mildly, "I am willing to participate in the 28th Lunar New Year Tournament on my own accord. I am Contestant 97, Lin Sanjiu."

Meanwhile, in the pub, the man in a robe pulled down his hood. He stared at the screen as his eyes flashed with interest.

Chapter 115: You Will Regret This

Ever since Garden of Eden's Lunar New Year Fighting Tournament had started, this was the first time in 28 years that a female contestant voluntarily participated. With the high levels of informatization in the city, this news quickly spread throughout Garden of Eden. Within five minutes, everyone in the city had witnessed how Lin Sanjiu rebelliously presented herself on the screen. The program only showed one shot of how Sandwhale's incomplete corpse was thrown to the ground like a piece of rag. After that, his corpse was quickly carried away by a group of people. This was a valuable piece of information which would be used to analyze Contestant 97's combat abilities. After she was surrounded, Lin Sanjiu sat on an empty chair and cooperatively placed her arms behind herself to let them tie her up once more.

The cameramen were at the end of their wits by this point. A swarm of cameras surrounded Lin Sanjiu, showing her from all angles on the screen. The pink-faced host was so annoyed that the veins on his face were bulging. He held on to another camera that was heading her way, shouting at the audience while the medical staff quickly rushed over to check her wounds. The only person that seemed unaffected was Lin Sanjiu, who sat in the middle of the whole commotion.

The pink-faced host took a few deep breaths and stood in front of her. His spittle sprayed everywhere as he asked, "Contestant 97, can you tell us what happened in the changing room? Why are you willing to participate in this tournament? Do you know what this involves?"

It took a while before Lin Sanjiu turned to look at him. She had no intention of sharing anything with these people. Even though she looked composed when she was walking out of the door, she still felt somewhat shaken when she remembered what had happened.

After meeting so many people, that ability to turn one's body into a sandstorm was definitely the top three most lethal ability she had encountered.

When she was trapped between the two sandstorms, Lin Sanjiu really had no way to escape. This was because her plan was just like what Sandwhale had predicted. She wanted to lead the sandstorm towards him so that he would protect himself... She didn't expect that his entire body could become sand so she was really driven to the edge of death.

Just then, she noticed something under her legs. As this was a changing room shared by many, the room was divided into many hanging curtains. After that chasing and dodging, both of them had torn down most of these curtains which were left messily on the ground.

Lin Sanjiu found a messy pile of cloth just by her feet in the right place at the right time. Lin Sanjiu immediately dropped to the ground, at the same time she pulled the curtain with her left hand and shielded her head and upper body. Her lightning speed action took less than half a second. While Sandwhale laughed loudly, the grains of sand hit against the cloth in Lin Sanjiu's hand. Every grain of sand was like a small metal ball. Even if they fell on a metal board, they would cause multiple dents, let alone the curtain fabric. Initially, Sandwhale thought he would be able to see Lin Sanjiu die from the sandstorms. However, his laughter stopped and he suddenly lost his voice.

The cloth, along with a large amount of sand, disappeared from his sight. The remaining sand which missed the curtain struck Lin Sanjiu's legs. Unfortunately, every grain of sand was actually made from Sandwhale's blood and flesh. After losing that volume of flesh, naturally, the strength that could be exerted with the remaining grains of sand was greatly reduced. That attack wasn't even strong enough to break her bones.

Sandwhale stared wide-eyed at the card in Lin Sanjiu's hand

before slowly looking down at his empty chest. The remaining sand which assaulted her quickly retreated back to their master's body. They reverted back to flesh covering a small portion of his chest cavity. However, there was still a gaping hole the size of a head right in the middle of his chest and there was no sand left.

For a moment, Lin Sanjiu could only hear her own drumming heartbeat. Sure enough, the sand which had been turned into a card could no longer be considered part of Sandwhale's body.

"Crash!" Sandwhale's knees hit the ground. He was in a total daze.

"No. This is impossible. Even if you can change items into cards..." By now, he could already guess Lin Sanjiu's ability but he just couldn't believe what had happened, "You had to choose the exact time when the sand hasn't pierce through the cloth to change everything into a card...No... That level of accuracy..."

If Lin Sanjiu had missed the right time to activate her ability, Lin Sanjiu would have been pierced by the numerous grains of sand. In the past, she could have failed. But, just as her physical capabilities have increased, Lin Sanjiu's proficiency at using her abilities, her understanding about them and how to exploit them were also getting better each day.

Perhaps, this is the key reason why Posthumans with Growth type abilities would become so powerful in their later stage of advancement.

Meanwhile, Lin Sanjiu could feel her adrenaline rushing through her blood after that gamble. She held the [Sand from a chest cavity] card so tightly in her hand that her knuckles were turning white.

"Please... Please... Give me back my sand..." Sandwhale was still speaking. It was unfathomable how he could still make a sound even without his respiratory tract. "I... I already told you that this is the 28th Lunar New Year Fighting Tournament..."

Sandwhale could no longer support himself and curled on the ground as these words left his mouth. Lin Sanjiu stepped forward and saw that she could see the red carpet on the floor through the hole in his chest. Her face stiffened as she asked softly, "Fighting Tournament? Isn't that quite common? Why do you have to use such methods to get contestants?"

Sandwhale did not make a single sound. Lin Sanjiu only realized that he was dead after a few seconds. She crouched for quite some time without moving until she heard the pink-faced man's excited voice. Her expression changed in a split second. If she could crush the card in her hand, the [Sand from a chest cavity] card would have long been reduced to shreds of waste paper.

[Sand from a chest cavity]

Description: It is illegal to buy or sell an organ! But it is legal to buy and sell sand. This is a dream item that all organ smugglers covet! It is just a pile of sand when you hold it in your hands but when you stuff it in a chest, it instantly changes back to a heart, two perfect lungs and a stomach filled with free-ranged rat, etc. This is originally a part of Sandwhale. There is no real combat value.

It was as if she could still feel that card buried deep in her skin when she thought about that.

After noticing that Lin Sanjiu was not replying, the pink-faced man asked another question, "Do you know what this tournament is about?"

Lin Sanjiu shook her head slowly.

Once he got her response, the pink-faced man suddenly became very enthusiastic. He turned to the camera and yelled, "This is a record-breaking event!" While he continued jabbering, Hui Chuyan, who was sitting not far from Lin Sanjiu, let out a fleeting wail. It was as if she couldn't control herself, she even started trembling.

[Could it be that she knows the details of this Lunar New Year Tournament?]

Noticing that the cameras and the host had stopped focusing on her, Lin Sanjiu lowered her body and quietly asked, "Hey, are you called Hui Chuyan?"

The black-haired girl lifted her pair of lackluster eyes. Seeing that the girl was on the brink of a breakdown, she knew that there was nothing much she could do even if she was impatient. She curbed her usual hasty nature and asked patiently, "Which world are you from?"

That question seemed to bring some sense back to the girl. It took a long time before Hui Chuyan replied through sobs, "There is a zombie outbreak in my homeworld. This is my second world."

"What a coincidence. This is my second world too. How long have you been here?" Even though Lin Sanjiu couldn't comprehend how the girl could live through a world with zombies with that personality, Lin Sanjiu tried her best to appear as friendly as possible, "Do you know something about this tournament? Could you tell me more?"

Once she said that, the other women who were close to them peered over, trying to overhear Hui Chuyan's reply. As if she had been scared by the question, it took quite a while before Hui Chuyan finally managed to squeeze out a few words, "I... I have been here for almost nine months... I didn't come here alone... My sis, my sister..."

She stammered and took quite some effort to say those words. Her face showed her fear and grief. Just as she started, the screen suddenly blared, "CITIZENS OF GARDEN OF EDEN!" Shocked, she swallowed back the words she was about to say.

Lin Sanjiu cursed inwardly but there was nothing much she could do. She just stared angrily at the large screen. The female host with pouty lips sat happily in the middle of the screen. Her

tone was light-hearted and very cheerful, "Now that we have introduced all the 100 female contestants with their own charms for our Lunar New Year Tournament, do you already have your favorite contestant in mind?"

[100?]

Lin Sanjiu realized that other than the people who were kidnapped with her, there were 91 other women who had been kidnapped and slowly transported to Garden of Eden. [Is this a battle royale of 100 people?] Lin Sanjiu's face darkened.

Just then, she felt someone casting a gaze at her. She turned her head and found Hui Chuyan looking at her, but her eyes looked hollow. She whispered, "You said you are willing to participate... but you are going to regret this..."

"What did you say?" Lin Sanjiu frowned.

Hui Chuyan turned her head back to the screen mechanically. Following her actions, Lin Sanjiu watched the screen and saw that the screen divided once more. The female host and the experts occupied a small section of the screen at the corner, while there were a few words on the screen: Let's recap the exciting scenes from previous tournaments

"Quick! Cameras go! You guys have to capture their faces clearly, especially their expressions when they see the recaps. We need to show them to the entire country later!" The pink-faced man shouted at the cameramen.

Chapter 116: The Status of Women in Garden of Eden

"Why... Why?"

The pub was filled with cheers and whoops which grew with each minute, so loud that the robotic arms serving alcohol vibrated slightly. The quiet comment was easily drowned up by the raucous noise, and was heard only by the man directly opposite the speaker.

The man's face was hidden once again under his hood, so half his face was covered by shadow. He did not reply immediately but instead leaned to a side listening to the crowd's crazy celebratory hubbub before he gave a dismissive snort, curling one side of his lips.

"That's because we aren't human to them," he responded with his baritone voice while he took a sip of his blue cocktail.

The man in front of him was slim and dark-skinned. He was probably in his twenties or early thirties. He was stunned, and somehow his usually bright and inquisitive eyes were covered by a dull glaze.

He gaped, almost as if his voice was turning as pale as his face, "I don't understand... even if we are different, this is too..."

"Too what?" the man in robes gave a wan smile, "Don't humans have the same attitude towards cockfights, bullfighting, and dogfights? The only thing is that we look exactly like them, that's why there are those—" he did not finish his sentence. At that point, the slim man lost focus in the conversation and suddenly covered his own mouth. Cold sweat appeared all over his body as he tried to hold back his nausea, making a muffled voice.

The light from the screen flickered over his face while the cheers from the crowd abated. The slim man turned and saw that the

recap has ended and the female host was back on the screen. He quickly downed a few large gulps of beer but his face still looked sickly. "I... I don't understand" the slim man gripped his beer bottle tightly. The disgust he felt when he saw those images previously made him so uncomfortable that it was as if he could feel his soul cringing.

The man hidden in robes continued sluggishly, "No one knows the exact date that this apocalyptic world called Garden of Eden descended. Everyone only knows that it has been a few decades. At that time, the citizens here had advanced technology. They created this city enclosed in glass and many normal people with zero Potential Growth Value survived. Even though they cannot leave this radiation-free zone, they are not subjected to random transportation to other New Worlds. Thus, they continued thriving till today."

"Do you know how large this 'Garden of Eden' City is?" he suddenly asked.

The slim man shook his head and did not say a word as he was afraid that he might spit out the gastric juices he barely managed to keep down.

"By foot, you could explore the entire place in three hours." The voice that escaped the robe was as calm and unwavering as before, "Can you imagine a life like that? Living in a restrictive cage from the day you were born, unable to leave and knowing that you will just have a job that the government assigns, raising a limited number of children as dictated, dying in a designated spot, and out there... there are those free Posthumans coming and leaving as they want.."

"Brother Gong, are you condoning their actions?" The slim man slammed his beer bottle on the table. Suppressing his anger, he muttered, "There is no reason to let—"

The man in a robe shook his head and replied, "I don't mean to

absolve their sins. I just feel that their psychological changes are very interesting... It's just my occupational disease."

"What sort of changes?"

"At first, this group of people probably only envied Posthumans and wished that they could leave this glass city. That was until they realized that the Posthumans that arrived were desperate to enter the city."

The slim man's expression froze.

"Not only did we want to enter their city, but also lust for their resources: Anti-radiation gummies, clothes, clean water... We not only have nothing but we have to suffer the fate of being transported to other New Worlds." He smiled, "Some other New Worlds also share the right wing views that Posthumans are not humans. But this is a perfect place to inculcate the view that Posthumans are a lower classes organisms deep in the people's consciousness. Under such conditions, with the lack of entertainment, and no proper cultivation of empathy, this Lunar New Year Tournament was finally created."

The slim man stared out in a daze for a long time before he could connect the brief explanation to the cheering behavior he witnessed.

"Brother Gong..."

He wanted to say more but he was interrupted by an eruption of shrieks and whistles. He turned to the screen and realized that after the recap, the program proceed to the popularity poll of the contestant. At that moment, the screen was showing many of the popular contestants and the people in the pub became loud and enthusiastic again.

Each resident of Garden of Eden wore a small wristband which projected a screen when it was activated. They just had to swipe across the projected screen to vote for their favorite contestant.

Right now, the most popular contestant was a fearful looking black-haired girl whose name seemed to be Hui Chuyan. The second most popular contestant was a twelve-year-old child followed by a fourteen-year-old. People clearly voted for them because of their young age.

The contestants who had the highest votes would appear much later in the tournament, this was for viewership and to attract sponsors. The list started from the most popular contest and even after some time, Contestant 97 did not appear on the screen.

Lin Sanjiu's cold expression only appeared on the screen after 50 over people have been shown. The reason for her popularity? It was stated as: "I want to see that proud and aloof woman face defeat and humiliation in battle."

"Defeat and humiliation..." Lin Sanjiu repeated the words on the screen, but her face looked stoic. However, if someone who understood her temperament had walked closer, they would be alarmed by her tumultuous glare. Her violent emotions seeped from her eyes, even though she was trying her best to hold it back, and that was an ominous sign. She never knew her emotions could be so intense.

After watching the recap of past tournaments, she couldn't help feeling that all the vocabulary she knew was too mild. Nothing could properly describe the complex feeling she felt— was it shock? Disgust? Fear?

After thinking for a while, she decided that her mood was closer to "rage".

"Oh, you are talking about the female host this year? Yeah, she's not bad."

Lin Sanjiu heard the idle gossip between the pink-faced host and one of the cameraman. They were obviously already used to the "Let's recap the exciting scenes from previous tournaments".

"Has her father set her price?" the cameraman asked.

"Yup. It is quite high, but it shouldn't be a problem for a rich man's son like you. You can try... But, I heard that she wants to work even after getting married."

The cameraman suddenly scoffed, "If someone buys her, who is she to talk about conditions? I think no one would want to buy such a wilful woman."

"Haha. Maybe her price would drop if her father got anxious..."

"My cousin bought one this year. She had a premarital affair so her family had to drop her price..."

"How many women has your cousin bought? He is still buying more?"

The corner of Lin Sanjiu's lip twitched a little as she listened quietly to the men's unbridled conversation. A sour stench pervaded the air as a few of the contestants could not control their nausea so the floor was covered with puddles of vomit. The makeup on their faces were ruined due to the mixture of sweat, tears, mucus and saliva. Some of them were crying unconsciously while the others were in a daze.

Lin Sanjiu turned behind to look at the pink-faced host, but the latter continued chatting cheerfully with the cameraman.

"Hey, you." Lin Sanjiu called softly, "I have something to ask you."

The pink-faced man was momentarily stunned. He exchanged glances with the cameraman before he tilted his head, staring back condescendingly, "What?"

"Who are the organizers of this tournament?"

"Why do you want to know?" The pink-faced man looked away. When he was on camera, he acted as if he was so eager to hear more from her. In contrast, he looked as if he was holding back his

revulsion when he was speaking to her. "All of you just have to participate in the tournament. There is no need for you to be bothered with anything else."

Their conversation caught the attention of Hui Chuyan, who looked over at them with a blank expression. Their conversation wasn't all that audible as the room was filled with the sound of sobbing or vomiting, yet she heard them clearly because she was close to them.

The smile on Lin Sanjiu's face could be considered gentle. She looked at the pink-faced man and spoke with a very cordial tone, "I ask and you'll answer.. I don't want you to regret if things get ugly later."

Hui Chuyan and two other women were stunned. Seeing the pink-faced man shocked and angry reaction, Lin Sanjiu smirked. After watching that recap, she couldn't restrain the murderous intent she felt in her heart, and it was clouding her rationality.

There were about thirty fully armed soldiers in the room and Sandwhale's six lackeys. Even though their boss was dead, for some reasons they did not leave but continued monitoring the women closely.

Lin Sanjiu had gotten back her [Voice Recorder] from his corpse and a protection-type Special Item. If she activated it, she could probably survive the attacks from these people until she could store the rope and activate her Pygmalion Choker..."

Her plan wasn't perfect but after running through it once in her head, Lin Sanjiu did not wish to think any longer and decided to just take action.

Just as she was feeling hot-headed and was about to shout out [Lone Wolf Casual-smart Leather Belt Protection], she heard a trample of footsteps as if many people were rushing to the room. Following which, someone yelled out, "Send all these contestants away for preparation. The tournament will start next Monday at 9

am sharp!"

Chapter 117: The Lunar New Year Tournament Begins

The Lunar New Year Tournament did not actually have a fixed duration, and "one month" was just an estimation of the event from the opening celebrations to the closing ceremony. The actual duration of the tournament depended on the number of young female Posthumans they could kidnap from the outside world. In a good year, the organizers could get about a few hundred contestants; there were years where it continued with just about 40 or 50 contestants.

This year, there were only 100 contestants. With two rounds every day, about nine to ten female Posthumans would be expended each day, so the event would only last for about slightly over ten days. With the celebratory atmosphere around, the tournament merchandises were already selling like hotcakes in the city.

The photos of the few most popular female contestants had been made into posters and phone accessories which were well-received by teenagers. All of the contestants' stats have been analyzed and collected in a databook, which the residents could view after purchasing it from their projected screen. Using the databook and the lengthy reports from the experts on TV, the residents could place bets on the different contestants.

However, these merchandises sold before the tournament starts were nothing compared to the items which would only be available at the later stage of the tournament.

Some rich man had already purchased the rights to the taxidermied Hui Chuyan, the most popular contestant in the tournament. No matter in what condition the dead body would end up, the taxidermists could revert the body to a pristine condition according to the customer's wishes. This was done by

dissecting the body and removing all the soft tissues, then drying the skin and using some sculpting and modeling techniques to finally produce a lifelike taxidermied female Posthuman. Many taxidermy shops basically survived by doing such businesses.

The people who could not afford to buy the taxidermy models could collect other memorabilia left behind after the female Posthuman died, such as weapons, their torn clothes, video recording of the match... In any case, for the entertainment industry, the Lunar New Year Tournament was the longest lasting, largest and most lucrative event.

"As we are the most outstanding creations of God, standing at the pinnacle of all humankind, we are thus able to create the world's greatest spiritual celebration..."

Lin Sanjiu listened quietly to the TV while she stood in her capsule. Those were the words used by the male host to describe the recap of the Lunar New Year Tournament. The space in the capsule was less than one cubic meter, so she couldn't walk or lie down. There was a board at the back of the capsule which she could lean against when she was tired and that was all she could do to rest. There were numerous similar capsules beside her and each of them contained a bound female contestant.

Lin Sanjiu could easily convert the rope into a card and if she touched the capsule, she could immediately gain her freedom. In fact, as long as it was tangible and did not weigh over one ton, there was nothing in this world which could trap her.

However, she did not take action.

One of the reasons was because of the tight security in the tournament arena—there were over a hundred fully armed soldiers and they guarded every corner of the arena. The countless number of black sentry guns on the ceiling were all aimed at either the capsule containment area or the battle arena. It was not hard to figure out that the organizers would not hesitate for one second to

use all that firepower if they spotted any odd behavior from the Posthumans.

A total of 100 capsules were placed at the back of the large oval battle arena and was segregated from the rest by a metal barricade. There were rows after rows of stair-like audience seats at the other side of the arena, which could house at least 10,000 people.

—

This was the first day of the tournament. As the least popular contestants would fight first, the ticket sales were the poorest on the first day. There were only three to five people sitting in each of the rows and not even half the tickets were sold.

Not just today but the tickets for the first few days were always hard to sell. They were occasionally bought as corporate Lunar New Year welfare benefits or as inexpensive souvenirs. After the third day, the price of the tickets would increase exponentially. The tickets for the last two days were so popular that getting just one ticket was not guaranteed even with a lot of money.

She could understand why there was a lack of audience, but Lin Sanjiu found it strange to see the audience members all wearing the same style of hooded robes. They were fully covered from head to toe, even their faces were hidden and all of them were wearing a pair of transparent glasses.

[What is that?]

She wasn't curious for long because the male host started speaking, "My dear audience, happy Lunar New Year! I want to welcome you all to the first match of the Lunar New Year Tournament! I sincerely hope that you will enjoy this great experience and go back happy at the end of the day! Now, we will invite the competitors to enter the arena. Before they enter the arena, please check that your anti-radiation clothing is proper donned..."

Lin Sanjiu moved to the walls of the capsule and stared at the audience, checking their clothes.

[Of course, contestants were all caught outside, so there is still radiation in bodies. The residents here are very cautious...]

Five capsules slowly slid toward the battle arena. Lin Sanjiu was a little stunned. When she looked a little closer, she realized that the 100 capsules were arranged and packed on a conveyor track. The capsules followed the track that brought them to the arena.

"Click!"

The doors of the capsules opened. It took quite some time before the first person gingerly stuck her head out to look. One by one, the pallid-looking female contestants walked out from their capsules. They had all been untied.

Even if contestants refused to come out from the capsule, the organizers had their way of changing their minds. One of the contestants who did not step out was electrocuted. Her body shook so violently that she fell out from the capsule. The voltage must have been high as she didn't get up even after a long time. Her face turned pale green and she just stopped moving.

This was obviously done to warn the remaining 95 women. Regardless whether they were dead or alive, once all the five women were out of their capsules, the capsules were immediately transported away from the arena.

"The female contestants have already entered the arena! I wonder what sort of opponents they will have to deal with today?" With the host enthusiastic tone, the few audience members cheered.

Lin Sanjiu could see the closeup view of the women in the arena on a large screen far away. When she saw the expressions on their faces, she couldn't help looking down, afraid to watch their faces.

A black prison van slowly stopped in front of the women. The

entire prison van was made of heavy-duty steel and there wasn't a single slit to reveal its content. It looked about five to six tons yet the weight did nothing to prevent the top section of the van from vibrating slightly as if whatever was inside was trashing violently against the walls.

When the female contestants noticed that, they turned pale. When the host saw that the prison van had stopped, he suddenly spoke in a chirpy voice, "Alright, now let us introduce the challengers!"

Lin Sanjiu held her breath as she stared at the door of the prison van without blinking. She had already been in Garden of Eden for a week, but it had been so eventful that she did not have time to think of one thing— why wasn't there any duoluozhong in the Garden of Eden?

Even if the initial batch of duoluozhongs had already died, there should still be people like Lin Sanjiu who couldn't develop anti-radiation passive abilities, so she should at least see a few around...

A white... limb extended out from the door.

They did not show these in the recaps but now this parade (Lin Sanjiu could only think of this collective noun) of hairless, horrendous contorted 'human bodies' were walking down leisurely from the prison van.

Even calling those 'human bodies' required a stretch of one's imagination. At least, this was her first time seeing such deformed 'humans'. Each duoluozhong there possessed unique aberrations, which were in different parts of their bodies. One of them had a large pair of compound eyes which took up two-thirds of its head. Another had a wart-covered body like a fried dough twist, Lin Sanjiu couldn't even spot where its face was.

The only commonality among them was that they were staring hard at the contestants and their sniffing noses—assuming one could figure out where their eyes and noses were.

The duoluozhongs, with their twisted bodies, walked down one after the other. Eight, nine, ten... but there were more. As the female contestants' expressions sank, a total of 30 duoluozhongs finally got out from the van.

"As you all know, the female mutates have already been sprayed with synthetic pheromones..." the host never-ending explanation rang out in the arena, his clear and crisp voice entered Lin Sanjiu's ears without a single static noise, "...and we have also ensured that they are not holding any items... Just as before, you will witness a fair and exciting match..."

"Our Lunar New Year Tournament holds the best elements of those ancient competitive games like 'soccer' and 'basketball'. Building on those foundations, you could say that our tournament is the best evolution of those games... Oh! How unexpected! Contestant 7's first reaction is to run!"

"I guess her ability is not suitable for combat... Haha! But she moves pretty fast. Come on, catch her! Let's take a look at what the others are doing. Two of the mutates have been totally surrounded, we almost can't even see their shadows. All you people seeing this on your TV screen, can you spot them?"

"Oh, what a surprise! Contestant 32 has the ability to regenerate her limbs, like a lizard? Oh, but the duoluozhongs caught her again... Her spine bone! They have torn most of the flesh off her back along with her vertebral column! That is an intact vertebral column! Oh, it's still moving! We can hear the jubilant cheers from the audience! They are indeed the strengthened breeds from our experimental labs!"

"Contestant 26 tried to run toward the audience and fainted after being electrocuted by the electrical fence... Arena maintenance members, please stand by to clean up the remnants..."

It wasn't even half-time, yet there were only two out of five contestants left. The host, who had been giving commentary all

this time, leaned back in his chair and took a sip of tea. Then, he tutted.

"Without sponsors for the first few rounds, it is really boring."

Chapter 118: I Will Remember All of This

Lin Sanjiu only heard the term "sponsors" on the fourth day of the tournament. After the end of day three, the capsule containment area had 29 fewer capsules. Among the 29 women, there were those with outstanding abilities, some who were quick-witted and others who worked together... but in the end, they all ended up dying in the most meaningless and banal way without a shred of dignity. Their remnants of blood and flesh dyed the arena red while the groups of duoluozhongs walked around making squishy sounds as they trampled over their bodies.

Out of the dead women, one of them had an ability that seemed related to her vision. Even after her body had been minced, one of her eyeballs remained intact. No matter how hard the duoluozhongs tried to step on it, it didn't burst. It simply rolled about in the bloody mixture on the ground with the sclera facing the ceiling.

After the end of each match, the number of duoluozhongs in the arena increased like the piling corpses. The duoluozhongs that were not killed in the match were not taken away, instead, they were allowed to roam the arena, waiting for the next batch of duoluozhongs to arrive. Perhaps due to the "strengthening experimentations" done to them in the Garden of Eden Laboratories, the duoluozhongs from the first three days seemed to be lacking in the intelligence department, their combat styles were also nothing unusual...

After the fourth day, Lin Sanjiu started to feel that those 29 women were lucky.

At that moment, the cameras were sweeping across the cheering crowd surging into the arena. Whenever a camera flew close to the crowd, it would cause the audience to shriek happily. Some people even took off their hoods and jumped up and down waving at the cameras. By this time, the seats had all been filled. The vendors

who were strolling through the rows of seats were all beaming. They sold all sorts of odd, colorful tidbits and souvenirs and easily cleared their stock in just a few minutes.

After the segment which showed the audience ended, a large closeup view of a contestant appeared on the screen while a tsunami of cheers erupted from the audience.

From the angle, the image on the screen was a direct feed from a camera in a capsule. The young girl who appeared on the screen was leaning against the wall of her capsule. She had a withered look as her eyelids drooped. It was as if she had already lost the will to fight. Even when she saw her face blown up on the screen in the center of the arena, her eyes only shifted a little.

She was only eighteen or nineteen. Even though she couldn't be considered beautiful, her age gave her an edge, giving her a certain appeal.

"This is Contestant 14, she is only 18 and her name is Xinyi. She has the lucky privilege of being the first female mutate with a sponsor. Please give her a round of applause!" Once the host said this, a beam was cast at the audience and an animated projection of blooming flowers appeared midair. After that, the words "The CEO of Garden of Eden Crop Sticky Cloning Technique Pte Ltd., Li Caiguang wishes everyone a Happy Lunar New Year" was shown, there was a small line of words which seemed to be the company's address.

It was only then that Xinyi glanced at the projection in midair with a slightly confused face.

"The future fate of Contestant 14 is in the hands of Li Caiguang, the CEO of Garden of Eden Crop Sticky Cloning Technique Pte Ltd. He chooses—" the host intentionally dragged his words to draw the attention of the audience. Then, he announced loudly, "Before she dies under the hands of duoluozhongs who have been fed aphrodisiac, Contestant 14 would be beheaded!"

Through the large screen, everyone could see Xinyi's facial features freezing up. Her previously apathetic expression fell off her face like a shattered mask.

For a second, the audience was absolutely silent.

Suddenly, from a corner, someone started clapping. The sound spread like a contagion among the audience and soon the arena was assaulted by the sound of applause. Lin Sanjiu thought that she might have misheard something as she looked in a daze at the screen.

Xinyi covered her mouth and suddenly vomited. Light yellow gastric fluid seeped through her fingers and then the screen cut over to another contestant.

This was a fair woman whose age was around 35. She had a mature elegance and was well endowed. She would have looked more alluring if the camera wasn't shaking so much due to her pounding insanely on the walls of the capsule.

"The famous gourmet, the host of the popular food show 'Gentle Eats', the author, Woden wishes everyone a happy festive season. The fate he has chosen for Contestant 70 is..."

The woman stopped pounding. She looked up with vacant eyes, revealing her snow-white neck.

"...for both her breasts and her tender inner thighs to be cut off while she is still alive. Using these parts, Woden would personally create a dish called 'Milky Mounds'. This will be shown later in the program... Anyone who is interested in collecting the taxidermy model of Contestant 70, please note that those parts will be modeled..."

Lin Sanjiu confirmed that what she heard was true. Lin Sanjiu clenched her fists. She could feel her temples pulsing as if a wild beast would climb out from her head any moment and eat up those people. She didn't know which of her emotions made her react so

strongly that her body began to tremble and her teeth began to chatter. She tried her best to control her muscles, but they wouldn't stop convulsing.

For today's match, only two out of the five women had the 'lucky privilege' of being sponsored. The host paused for a moment before he introduced the next segment, "There are three predictions for the amount of time that Contestant 14 would last under the hands of those duoluozhongs, they are 3-5 minutes; 6-9 minutes; and over 10 minutes. The experts tentatively classified her ability as a type of increased agility..."

The capsule Xinyi was in started sliding toward the battle arena. Lin Sanjiu couldn't even imagine the expression on that girl's face.

When the chosen capsules stopped in the middle of the battle arena, the screen showed the bets by the residents placed on Contestant 14's survival time. The first two options were very popular and the amount wagered just kept climbing whereas only a few took a gamble on the third option.

Soon, the segment for the bets to be placed on Contestant 14 and Contestant 70 ended. The black van, so familiar to Lin Sanjiu, stopped outside the arena.

As the battle arena was fully covered by blood and flesh of the casualties, the prison van was parked outside, probably to prevent the vehicle from skidding.

The duoluozhongs which came out from the van were visibly different from those used in the past three days. The duoluozhongs which were currently in the arena barely looked like humans and seemed to only have a violent intent to kill. However, the duoluozhongs that just arrived, though hairless, retained their most important appendages. From the looks of it, Garden of Eden Laboratories definitely strengthened...

The appendages were almost as long as a man's lower leg, swung between their knees as the duoluozhongs walked, evoking the

image of a male horse. There was an indescribable expression on each of the duoluozhongs' twisted faces, but the growing excitement in their eyes was undeniable and their appendages were also getting tenser.

Xinyi let out a heart-wrench scream as white fumes poured out from her capsule. This immediately attracted the duoluozhongs' attention. The white fumes were sex pheromones specifically made to target those duoluozhongs.

Lin Sanjiu collapsed in her capsule. Her fingers clawed the walls of the capsule. As she used too much strength, her nails were almost about to flip. The nerves in her nails were sending pain signals like mad but Lin Sanjiu closed her eyes, panting as if she couldn't feel anything.

Lin Sanjiu couldn't help feeling confused at her current condition. Her body was shaking uncontrollably, her muscles ached and her vision was blurry. This reminded her of the feeling she had when she was lying on the grass when she just arrived in this New World. She did not have any anti-radiation protection then, but she was now protected by the glass walls, so logically the level of surrounding radiation shouldn't be lethal to her...

Lin Sanjiu tried to watch the events unfolding with her bloodshot eyes. She tried to forget the discomfort she was feeling. She wanted to watch and remember everything. She wanted to avenge those women she barely knew...

Through her hazy vision, she spotted a member of the audience in the first row who was sitting closest to the capsule containment area. The person looked at the capsules and hesitated for a moment, then looked at the duoluozhongs, before finally taking out a small bag and pouring out some anti-radiation gummies. The person slowly placed the gummies into a tube under his or her hood.

Lin Sanjiu understood instantly what was happening to her. A

familiar darkness overtook her consciousness, she closed her eyes unwillingly and fainted.

Chapter 119: Night Security Guard

The protective glass shield could not block off 100% of the surrounding radiation. The glass could block the radioactive particles in the air, the effects from the radioactive clouds, and radiation-contaminated creatures, etc. However, no matter what methods the residents tried, they were unable to decontaminate the soil under their feet.

The residents of Garden of Eden could not eat soil grown crops, instead, they had to ration their crops which were grown via aeroponics. It took twenty years of research before the "Crop Sticky Cloning Technique" was developed. It was only then that sufficient food was produced to support the city. In the past, women who haven't had children could never have a full meal.

Due to low-grade terrestrial radiation from the ground, all the residents were recommended to consume a certain dosage of anti-radiation gummies every month to maintain their health. In fact, only low-income residents lived in small buildings or on the first or second floor. The rich people in the city all owned sky villas and their own advanced technologies to reduce their radiation exposure.

Unfortunately, Lin Sanjiu was naively unaware of this information. After she killed Sandwhale, there was no one around to feed her any anti-radiation gummies. Sandwhale was just the head of a gang which kidnapped female Posthumans. Even though he had quite a few men under him, there was no reason for them to work together once he died. If it weren't because Garden of Eden wanted more contestants and set a condition that people who bring in the winning contestant could stand to win some of the prize money from the wagers, those men that came would have scattered like birds. Thus, they wouldn't bother spending any effort on the person brought in by Sandwhale.

In a normal world, the natural background radiation that

humans are exposed to is only a few millisieverts per year. The radiation delivered by a CT scan or a chest x-ray also doesn't cause much harm to a human body. But when radiation had to be measured in sieverts, it would be dangerous.

If a normal person was exposed 3 to 4 sieverts of radiation, they would have already died or ended up half-dead. When Lin Sanjiu first arrived in Garden of Eden, her body already absorbed up to 15 to 16 sieverts of radiation. Without her physical enhancements, she would have died long ago. Even though she was saved by Er Dao's blood and by eating the anti-radiation gummies, she was still exposed to constant radiation. The only difference was it went from a few sieverts per hour to a slower rate of a few hundred millisieverts. This did not apply only to her, but everything that existed in this world, except the duoluozhongs. Passive abilities like Radiation Immunity and anti-radiation gummies only helped to reduce the accumulated radiation in a person's body to a safe level. This was also the reason why those anti-radiation gummies, which had addictive effects, were still very popular outside the snow globe city.

Since Lin Sanjiu had not consumed any anti-radiation gummies for almost a week, the radiation in her body had already reached 10 sieverts. If she wasn't so tense and focused on the tournament, she would have noticed her growing discomfort much earlier.

The image of her body smashing against the wall of her capsule and slowly sliding down was captured by the mini camera inside the capsule. Lin Sanjiu did not wake up even when the matches for the fourth day of the tournament ended. However, the news that Contestant 97 had fell into a coma only took up a very small corner on a page of entertainment news that day. It didn't raise much interest other than stopping a few rich men from "sponsoring" her.

Xinyi, the well-endowed Contestant 70 and three other "sponsored" women in the afternoon match died that day, living up to the 'expectations' that Garden of Eden had of them. This was

nothing extraordinary. Ever since someone had thought up of the brilliant plan to limit the contestants to all female posthumans, it just became a common acceptable practice in the Garden of Eden.

Now, there were only 60 contestants who had not participated in the matches. Out of all the matches in the past four days, there were only two survivors. Apart from the physical injuries they sustained, they were both totally traumatized. The contestant who was in the same match as Xinyi already went crazy after witnessing the 12 minutes Xinyi had suffered at the hands of those duoluozhongs. Every now and then, incoherent singing could be heard from her capsule. The other contestant was in a slightly better state. When the organizers gave her a choice to "continue participating or stop", she withdrew into her capsule without any hesitation.

On the night after the fourth day of the tournament, all the women in the capsules, except Lin Sanjiu, became very desperate. It was one thing to participate and fight with duoluozhongs because they still had a winning chance, but they realized that killing themselves might be a better fate than being tortured and humiliated to death like Xinyi and the others. Yet, once they had the intention to do so, they were already unable to implement their plan.

The organizers were already very familiar with such antics after holding so many rounds of tournaments. As the female contestants started to realize their circumstances, rebel, or try to kill themselves, the measures used against them also become more sophisticated. The nozzles installed in the capsules, used for spraying the pheromones, now sprayed a different gas.

It was very expensive to manufacture this particular gas so the organizers would only use it at this point in the tournament. The women suddenly felt very weak. Although they couldn't move their limbs and couldn't even move their eyes, their five senses were still sharp and their brains were still working fine. Well,

except for the portion that controlled their movements.

When it was time for a contestant to enter the arena, she will be doused with a sour liquid. Once she could move her body, the capsule would open and a machine would untie her. By then, anyone in that position would know that it was their match.

The "sponsorships" and bets for the fifth day were just as horrendous. During this time, many normal women in Garden of Eden would switch off their television and wait in fear for their husbands to return. From the fifth day onward, watching the tournament would evoke the greatest brutality, insanity, and lust from their men. This would continue until the end of the tournament and many normal women were also tortured to death during this period.

The families who had daughters were usually very alert during this period. Even if they had sold their daughters, they were still their children. So they were entitled to some compensation if their daughters died. For that reason, some families refuse to raise sons, they specifically raised daughters so that they could sell them and hope to earn more during the Lunar New Year Tournament.

Those parents were certainly not disappointed by the tournament this year. At the end of the fifth day, there was still a lingering aura of tension and brutality in the empty arena. With the lighting effects and applause, the arena seemed dead. A few duoluozhongs that refused to sleep would occasionally let out some grumbling sounds as they walked around the bloodied floor. The electric net, which segregated the battle arena from the audience seats, would make a snapping sound and emit a flash of light every so often. These sounds made the atmosphere of dead silence in the capsule containment area even weirder and more desolate.

Fifty women laid at the bottom of their capsules. Most of them had their eyes wide opened. Lin Sanjiu wasn't sprayed with that gas but her condition was poorer than the others. She slipped in and out of her coma. She had a high fever and though it was not as

bad as the previous time, she could not stay conscious and her body ached all over. Despite that, she was unable to do much. She wanted to revert her [Er Dao's Corpse] card back to its original form to obtain more of his blood but somehow, she failed even after trying a few times. She suspected that her high fever affected her ability but she did manage to pull out her mouthpart weapon without any issue.

Within the rare few minutes which she was conscious, she inferred that the space around her might be too tight. There just wasn't enough space for Er Dao's large body to corporealize, so naturally she couldn't summon the card. She heard the sound of heavy breathing walking towards the containment area. This was accompanied by the light from multiple flashlights.

Initially, she could hear the hesitation from the sound of the footsteps but as the men started to talk, they moved much quicker towards the capsule. They took less than a minute to reach the capsule containment area.

"Are you sure this is alright?" a man spoke with a rough voice and let out a dry cough as though it would calm his nerve. "I have lots of experience f*cking women, but are these even considered women..."

"Hehe. There is something you don't know." The flashlights came closer and when a beam of light sweep across the floor, it revealed a scrawny man. Even though he was short and appeared skinny, he had an attention-grabbing, large spare-tire belly.

"I have been a night security guard for this tournament for a few years now. This is not even my first time doing this." The scrawny man patted the gun attached to his waist. "They are not different from ordinary women. I would say that it feels even better! Maybe they run a lot out there, so their thighs are so firm..."

As he said this, he gulped a mouthful of saliva noisily.

The man with the rough voice stopped for a moment. He seemed

convinced but he had a new question, "But the radiation..."

"Don't worry. I brought some gummies and anti-radiation after gel! If it was dangerous, would I join you?" The skinny security guard scoffed. He pointed to the others and said, "They all paid good money before I brought them here. If you weren't my relative, I wouldn't tell you this good deal..."

One of the men who had paid him laughed, "That's right. This is so much cheaper than getting a taxidermied model or souvenirs after the tournament. It's great value! Anyway, they'll be dead tomorrow. Why not let us guys enjoy them?"

A wave of dizziness washed over Lin Sanjiu so she immediately bit her own lips. The pain kept her conscious as she swallowed the salty taste in her mouth. Now, the men's voice was just nearby.

There were six men in total, and some of them were wearing those anti-radiation robes, while others were not. After all, they wanted excitement when they decided to sneak into the arena to have some fun with these women. What could be more exciting than taking risks while f*cking women? Those that didn't wear their robes were obviously experienced men, they even went their own ways, pointing their flashlights into the capsules.

One of the men who was wearing a robe was still very worried, "Are you sure they can't fight back?"

The scrawny security guard sounded annoyed when he replied again, "Of course! I have done this for years. Did I ever get into any trouble? Don't worry!"

A man, some distance away, pulled out a young girl from a capsule. He panted heavily while he laughed, "Have you heard of event flags? Haha! If this was a television drama, your words would have triggered a death flag..."

The scrawny security guard responded with a half-hearted laugh and ignored his relative. He held the flashlight in his mouth as he

unbuckled his belt. A man without robes walked around a few rounds as if he was unsatisfied with what he saw.

"I did a busty woman and an eight-year-old last year. I am so sick of those pure, pitiful types..." he mumbled, "They always choose the same few types, it just gets a little boring."

The skinny security guard paused, turning his head to laugh. He walked over to Lin Sanjiu's capsule and knocked on it. "I know one which you might like... Do you see this? She is the contestant who joined willingly. She is just like an ice queen... Why don't you try her?"

The man without robes narrowed his eyes and smiled leeringly as he opened the door. Lin Sanjiu's feeble body immediately fell out as the door opened.

Chapter 120: A Dazzling Entrance

"Sob... sob..."

A female soft sobbing sounds could be heard from the small alley around the corner. Although she sounded like she was trying to control herself, the night was quiet, so her voice rang out clearly. The crying sounds went further and further until they were nothing more than a murmur which faded into the darkness.

Some distance away, under the orange glow of the lampposts which lit the street, two soundless shadows walked out.

"Brother Gong, she should be just up ahead," a slim man looked at the card in his hands and whispered softly to another man hidden in a long robe.

"Don't tell me it's that weepy woman?"

Even though that was a rhetorical question, the man sounded very certain. He quickened his pace and turned into the alley. Someone had covered the single lamppost in the alley with a coat, and light barely streamed through its fabric. In the dimly lit alley, a woman sat on the ground sobbing spasmodically with her back against a vending machine. When the robed man showed himself, she was shocked. She scrambled up, trying to run, but stopped as if she remembered something. She turned back and asked with a shaky voice, "Are you Mr. Gong Daoyi?"

The robed man nodded his head quietly and walked closer. He looked at the vending machine, then at the woman. The woman lowered her head in embarrassment, clenching her fists. There were many small shining balls on the ground, lying just by her feet. There were dozens of them and were indeed anti-radiation gummies.

Gong Daoyi lowered his eyelids as he looked at the petite woman in front of him. He laughed quietly before using his hand to wipe

off the patches of sugary evidence on the woman's face. Using a deep voice, he gently said, "Since it had already been set in stone, eating so many of these sweets won't change a thing... Look, you've made quite a mess."

His sudden actions caused the woman to freeze but she quickly relaxed once he drew back his hand calmly. The moment she let down her guard, tears poured from her eyes. She covered her mouth while she sobbed, "I... I really don't know what to do..."

Gong Daoyi pulled down his hood slowly, revealing a fair, handsome face. The reddish reflection off the sweets on the ground highlighted his beautiful jawline. His pair of star-dusted eyes were unusually clear and warm. The woman looked up at him and was momentarily a little stunned. She then wiped off the tears on her face, a little bashfully.

It was rare to see such a good-looking, handsome man in the Garden of Eden. Most importantly, his gaze was so warm and sincere that she just felt safe looking at him. He was nothing like the other men there. When those men stared at her, her goosebumps would appear immediately.

She had almost forgotten that the man she was looking at was someone that most people would be wary of, as he was a smuggler of Special Items.

"What's your name?" Gong Daoyi asked her amiably, probably with the intention to calm her down.

"I am Xueqin."

This woman called Xueqin was in her early twenties. Though she was in a sorry state, her features were exquisite. She composed herself before turning her attention to the slim man, looking at him with unease.

"This is my companion, Lei Ming. You don't have to worry." Gong Daoyi smiled. The laugh lines at the side of his mouth were

very beautiful.

Lei Ming nodded his head hurriedly as a sign of acknowledgment. As he stood quite far from them, the light from the anti-radiation gummies couldn't even reach him—he felt rather relieved because of this, and quickly hid his left hand which was covered with blood.

"Mr. Gong, I secretly left my husband's house, so I can't stay long..." Xueqin didn't know why, but she felt a little inferior standing in front of Gong Daoyi. She held her collar tightly, trying to hide the bruises on her chest, "I heard that you have something that could help me. Is it true?"

Gong Daoyi nodded, "When did you find out about your condition? How did this happen?"

Xueqin shuddered when she heard his questions. Facing someone like Gong Daoyi, she did not want to lie—Xueqin turned away her head as though the action could suppress the memories flooding to her head, "Once... I was unconscious for half a month. When I woke up, I couldn't move. I could only lie on the bed to recover, so I didn't eat any gummies for a long time... but after my wounds recovered, there was nothing wrong with my body. I became much stronger, so I didn't think of it..." Her tone suddenly changed, "until I realized—"

Gong Daoyi showed an expression which seemed to convey his pity and he quickly patted her shoulder gently and comforted her, "This isn't something serious. You don't need to be scared." When he noticed that she was calming down, he casually took out something black. He swept the item around her temples.

"Beep". A neon number appeared on the device. Xueqin wiped her tears as her eyes were filled with confusion.

Gong Daoyi sighed when he saw the number. "Your Potential Growth Value is 177, you've really evolved," he said apologetically.

Xueqin let out a loud sob when she heard the numerical value only associated with Posthumans and quickly forced herself to stop. Being a woman in the Garden of Eden was unlucky enough—the only thing worse than that was probably becoming a Posthuman.

Gong Daoyi sighed again as he took out a yellow sponge from his pocket. He placed it in her hand and explained how she should use it, "Remember, as long as you have this with you, your evolved abilities won't flare up and you won't continue evolving. However, when it becomes heavy, you have to squeeze the liquid out..."

Grabbing the piece of [Lu Xun Exclusive Similar Styled Sponge], Xueqin nodded her head to thank him profusely. She placed it carefully into her pocket. Noticing that she had been outside for quite some time, she gave Gong Daoyi a deep bow before she whispered her farewell, "Goodbye. If I don't go now, my in-laws might discover that I left. Thank you, Mr. Gong."

Even though it was essentially a deal, Gong Daoyi's gentle demeanor had been a great comfort to her. It was to the extent that she felt that she could continue no matter the hardships ahead if she just thinks back on what happened that night.

After he watched her wiping her tears and disappearing down the dark alley, Gong Daoyi took out a wristwatch that all residents of Garden of Eden owned and activated its screen. Lei Ming looked at him blankly, "Brother Gong, when did you..."

Gong Daoyi ignored him and pulled up his hood to hide his handsome face.

"You have reached the National Police Bureau, we are now connecting you to..." the mechanical sound from the wristwatch reverberated through the walls of the alley.

[Huh?] Lei Ming was so shocked that he couldn't even feel the sticky consistency of blood on his hand.

"Hello Resident 49384, how may I help you?" a middle-aged man with an unconcerned face appeared on the projected screen.

"Um, I would like to provide a tip-off." Gong Daoyi's voice had changed and lost its previous gentle, pleasing timbre. "I think that the woman on the same street as us is a mutate. Maybe, she had already infiltrated the city ages ago..."

The middle-aged man suddenly became interested, his face appeared larger on the screen, "Please provide me her name and more information!"

"Her name is Xueqin, 21. She is wearing a black jacket. I saw her eating a few handfuls of anti-radiation gummies on Sadema Street, and walking to the west..."

"Okay, she's headed west, right? How long was it since you last saw her? Ok, understood. Resident 49384, you have been a great help to our national security. Thank you for your contribution to the Garden of Eden. We will send men out to get her now!"

Lei Ming stood in a daze. He was unable to react even after Gong Daoyi switched off the screen, crushed the wristwatch and threw it into a flowerpot nearby.

"But... why?"

A smile appeared on Gong Daoyi's handsome lips as he looked at Lei Ming with his crystal clear eyes, "Even though it is regretful, I need her to be caught."

Before Lei Ming could ask why again, Gong Daoyi had already started walking while explaining, "I don't know how they deal with these things normally, but if they find a female mutate during this period with the Lunar New Year Tournament. Logically speaking, they would present her to the Tournament Committee... I don't know where the Tournament Committee works, so I need someone to lead the way."

"But... But, she might die!"

Lei Ming felt that he must be too shocked to think normally because he found himself unconsciously following behind Gong Daoyi though he did not approve that man's action.

"Who can avoid death?" Gong Daoyi's gentle voice was like a welcoming spring breeze, "Considering her current way of life, death might be a relief."

Lei Ming stopped talking but huffed while he walked expressing his complicated emotions. Both men were Posthumans with high levels of Physical Enhancement, so they moved very quickly. They reached the entrance of the National Police Bureau in a short time. They hid and waited for a few minutes. Gong Daoyi listened carefully and suddenly smiled with delight, "Give me the eyeball."

Lei Ming handed over the eyeball that he had been holding.

After two teams of fully armed soldiers entered and exited the building a few times. The National Police Bureau team finally carried an unconscious woman out and set off. Her body hung limply over one of the soldier's shoulder while the wind tousled her hair. Her skin was covered with purple bruises and she was hardly recognizable.

Lei Ming couldn't help closing his eyes when he saw her. But Gong Daoyi seemed totally unaffected as he tapped Lei Ming and followed the men. The fact that they could smuggle items from the Garden of Eden was enough proof that these men were quite capable—they followed the soldiers without anyone detecting them, and found themselves in front of the tournament arena.

"Oh, so the committee works upstairs?" Gong Daoyi mumbled to himself quietly noticing that the light from a small building beside the tournament arena had been switched on. After the soldiers left, he brought Lei Ming to the side entrance of the arena. He placed the eyeball in front of a biometric sensor. A green light swept across the eye and a 3D projection of a man's head appeared and greeted them, "Welcome. Have a great day at work..." The door

opened without a sound.

Gong Daoyi walked into the room before him with a tranquil expression. Just then, a woman's scream pierced through the silent darkness within the arena.

Chapter 121: Lin Sanjiu and the Chief of Police

The capsule containment area of the arena was usually the quietest place at night. Dozens of immobilized women laid at the bottom of their capsules like corpses. It was like a frozen frame in a movie. But, tonight was different—the air was filled with the rough panting sounds from men and the unique pungent stench of bodily fluids. This was accompanied with grunts and the sound of colliding bodies, creating an aura of sick decadence and excitement.

After the scrawny security enjoyed himself for one whole minute, he finished his business. He grabbed the clothes of the woman in front of him and wiped his body. While she stared at him motionlessly, he stood up and put on his pants. There were still sounds of heavy breathing coming from a few directions. The scrawny security guard placed his hands on his hip and surveyed the capsules around him and felt like a king. He strode over the woman beneath him and suddenly paused, "Huh? Why is it so quiet over at Laoliu?"

If he treated that ice queen too nicely, what would be the fun in that? The scrawny security guard chuckled and walked toward Contestant 97's capsule. In the darkness, some distance away, there was a figure lying on the ground. Though the silhouette was as motionless as the various women in their capsules, it belonged to a person who was much fatter. The scrawny security guard felt a shiver down his spine and hurried over. When he arrived and saw the scene, his vision suddenly turned black.

At first glance, he almost couldn't recognize Laoliu. Blood was pouring from every pore in that man's body and the strong smell of blood nearly made him light-headed. He shuddered while he squatted down to touch the body. The body was still warm. He

immediately jumped backward and shouted, "All of you, be careful!"

The second he reached for his tranquilizer gun, he felt a warmth in his throat. The scrawny security guard slowly looked downward, confused by his inability to speak. Without warning, the skin around his neck was split open. Warm blood spurted out from his severed arteries and immediately dyed the floor red.

"What are you shouting for? Don't you think we know that we have to be careful? You nearly scared us to death," the other men shouted angrily in response only when the security guard's body was about to fall to the ground.

A hand held on to the corpse's collar from behind. Lin Sanjiu placed the security guard gently on the ground without making a noise. She crouched down and took the tranquilizer gun by the man's waist. She converted it into a card [Tranquilizer gun for the Foot Soldier] and stored it into her body. Next, she looked at the two red cards in her hand.

She smiled slightly when she read the first few words. The previous symptoms she had just moments ago, the chronic fatigue and her high fever, had disappeared without a trace.

[Congratulations on leveling up! 2]

Introduction: It has almost been a year since the last level up. Considering the pace, Lin Sanjiu might finally break free from the curse of her low combat ability before she dies, right?

Active ability: Planar World

Level-up Count: 2

Forecast date of Next Level-up: Until the end of time

Level-up benefits: You can now convert up to 16 items, how wonderful! So now you know that when you level up, the number of items you can convert doubles, what a relief! There is finally an improvement in the artistic level of the card, it is now at the "High-

schooler with bad results who just started art class in hopes of entering a good university by taking the art entrance exam" level! And you finally have a card that has real combat value!

Her smile faded after reading the card, as it was always difficult to keep a smile after reading her own cards. Lin Sanjiu brought up the other red card with a mysterious glow. A line of words surfaced.

[Nostradamus's Card]

This seer's most notorious prophecy was the doomsday prediction that "the great and terrifying leader will come down from the sky in year 1999". Surprisingly, his prophecy did not come true, thus Nostradamus's grudge about this was utilized to create this card which specifically releases mini doomsday scenarios.

Instructions: Using the owner's, Lin Sanjiu, body as a medium, the card can store the "doomsday elements" that Lin Sanjiu's body is exposed to. After Lin Sanjiu has accumulated a certain level of that element in her body, she can extract and convert it into a Nostradamus's Card. For example, if her skin is exposed to a temperature above 85°C in Hyperthermal Hell, she can 'store' the high temperature into the card. When she uses the card, it would create a mini doomsday environment of 85°C.

In the same manner, radiation can be extracted from her body and once she has accumulated a high level of condensed radiation in her card, she can release all of it in an instance.

Range of doomsday environment: It's so small. If you want to envelop just one person within the environment, you better wait for the next level up.

Restrictions: After energy is released from a Nostradamus's Card, it requires a cooldown period of 24 hours before it can be used again even if the total accumulated energy is not released.

If she didn't have [Versu Poison] to buy her a little time, and if

her Planar World didn't level up in time, something serious could have happened. Lin Sanjiu emptied the 10 sieverts of radiation in her body right into her [Nostradamus's Card] and the battery symbol on the card now showed 10%.

"So this means that the card can store up to 100 sieverts of radiation? I can't help feeling that these numbers are getting easier to deal with..." Lin Sanjiu mumbled to herself as she hid it at the back of her capsule.

The remaining men who were enjoying themselves died before they even knew what happened to them. Lin Sanjiu stealthily killed three men consecutively. When each of them died, they stared at Lin Sanjiu with eyes filled with hatred, fear and despair. She thought that she could keep herself composed, and indeed she managed to slow down her racing pulse.

That was until she walked behind a balding fat man. Watching him panting while he moved, his fats jiggling around the thighs of the girl he was holding, the light reflecting off that bald patch in the middle of his head, it was almost impossible for her to muster even an ounce of mercy. When she saw the girl's stony eyes, Lin Sanjiu couldn't hold herself back any longer. "Get away from her!" she bellowed.

Following which, an oily bald human head flew across the room and landed with a "thud". That was the last man.

After she kicked the headless body off the girl, the arena returned to its usual dark silence. She could only hear the disorderly breathing sounds from the other women and her own thumping heart. She wiped her face before she crouched down and dressed the girl a little clumsily. The girl was very young. Tears fell from her raven eyes as she looked at Lin Sanjiu.

Ever since the security guard was killed, a red light in the arena lit up. However, Lin Sanjiu did not notice it as it was hidden from her view. Controlling her complicated emotions, she helped dress

all the women who had been pulled out from their capsules. Noticing that they were still unable to move, she starting feeling a little worried as she leaned against one of the capsules.

Six capsules have been opened, so there were five women on the ground. Even so, they were still unable to recover from the effects of the chemical they had inhaled. On top of that, no matter what method she tried, she was unable to open the other capsules. As there was a living person in each capsule, it was not possible for her to convert the capsules into cards.

When she searched the security guard's body, she couldn't find a key or something similar. The technology here in Garden of Eden was far more advanced than that in her own world, and momentarily Lin Sanjiu felt rather helpless. The most exasperating thing was finding out that there was an electric net surrounding the capsule containment area too. She had initially thought that her view of the battle area was not very clear just because she was in her capsule but it was actually due to the net.

Even though she had escaped the capsule, she realized that she was still trapped. [Is there really no way out?] Just as she was looking around anxiously, she suddenly heard a loud clapping sound. Someone, hidden in the darkness some distance away, was clapping loudly.

Shocked, Lin Sanjiu turned quickly and looked in the direction of the sound. She was too overwhelmed by her emotions just now so she did even noticed that someone had entered the arena.

"Ha! Good. You're terrific! What a great show!" a voice ranged out, and the man speaking intentionally dragged out the last syllable of each word. Once he said that, the harsh white lights were switched on one after the other. Light quickly assaulted the pitch-black arena, and Lin Sanjiu narrowed her eyes involuntarily.

A man in uniform stood by the left entrance clapping methodically. Another twenty uniformed men who seemed to be

his subordinates stood behind him. There was also a woman on the ground beside them. Her long hair covered her face, so it was impossible to tell if she was dead or alive.

The man who was clapping had a square-shaped face. Even though he was smiling, it did little to conceal his cold and stern demeanor. Though he was standing very far from the capsule containment area, he stared at Lin Sanjiu with eyes which conveyed his annoyance towards her, "When I noticed that the security alert had been activated, I thought it was a malfunction... How many years have we held this... yet no mutates ever managed to escape from those capsules. When I saw you from the camera, I was shocked. So this was all because of those scums..."

He peered over at the security guard's dead body before he made a soft scoffing sound. He turned and gave some orders to his men and turned back to Lin Sanjiu again, "Who would have expected such a twist of events this year?" the man said with a cold piercing voice which could even be heard outside.

Lei Ming paused when he heard this. "Brother Gong, are we really just leaving that woman to fend for herself?"

Gong Daoyi flashed him a gentle smile. "The chief of police already left the committee meeting, that means the room is empty now. Business comes first, I definitely need to get my hands on those confiscated Special Items... Lei Ming, aren't you coming?"

Chapter 122: The Match Begins and Long Ahtao

Gong Daoyi hummed a quick and interesting tune with a bright quality like that of flowing spring water, which resonated with his overall image. Though it sounded nice, Lei Ming couldn't help interrupting him and asking, "What if they did something to that woman? She is one of us..."

The humming stopped and Gong Daoyi waved his hands with a relaxed expression. "Why are you worried? If you were the chief of police, would you think this is a major event?"

Without the slightest interest in hearing what Lei Ming had to say, Gong Daoyi raised his [Girlfriend's Crazy Suspicion] and started scanning the entire room with it. Lei Ming was defeated by his attitude and didn't say anything else. In the end, he followed Gong Daoyi around the room while he considered those words with knitted brows.

If he thought carefully about it, from the perspective of the chief of police, it was just a small incident in which a Posthuman came out of her capsule because it was not shut tightly and nobody actually escaped. Strictly speaking, the issue with the night security guard wilfully neglecting his duty and letting people into the arena was a bigger problem...

"But..." After thinking for awhile, Lei Ming felt that if they didn't go back and took a look, he would continue feeling uneasy. However, before he could phrase his sentence, the item in Gong Daoyi's hand suddenly made a sound which stole his attention.

[Girlfriend's Crazy Suspicion]

Beside every secretive man with suspicious behaviors, there would be something like this! Women naturally become like Sherlock Holmes when things involve their love lives, finding all

sort of almost undetectable clues. The essence of this extraordinary ability has been extracted to create the best tool to search for Special Items within a small range.

PS: Unfortunately, just as its names suggests, this item may be inaccurate sometimes, it can also be deceived by 'sweet talk' so it is not 100% reliable.

"Ah, this strand of hair isn't mine. My hair is maroon..."

Gong Daoyi stopped in front of a wall once he heard that emotional female voice. He looked closer and quickly smiled.

Meanwhile, the chief of police Aliba was blissfully unaware that the recent batch of confiscated Special Items would be stolen soon, despite being convinced that he had hidden them extremely well.

Things turned out the way Gong Daoyi predicted. Although Aliba was furious, he didn't think much of the situation especially after he heard the words from the female Posthuman.

"I already declared that I'm joining this tournament on my own volition. I haven't changed my mind. So, I won't run away," Lin Sanjiu yelled as she held her slightly trembling clenched fists by her side. She bent down and hauled the security guard's corpse by its leg and threw it toward the electric net. Then, she yelled out again, "If it weren't for this man, we wouldn't be outside our capsules. Please don't make things difficult for these girls, I will put them back in their capsules and I will enter my own capsule. That should work for you, right?"

Aliba remained fixated on the woman, his raised his brows slightly revealing his slight astonishment. But before he could respond, the female Posthuman with short hair took action. She placed each of the women, that were now properly clothed, back into their respective capsules one by one. Finally, she went back into her own capsule and closed the door.

Subsequently, the clicking sound of the automatic locks on the

doors reverberated through the empty arena. Once the doors were secured, it was practically impossible for any of them to force open the capsule from the inside by brute force. The Tournament Committee had already verified this through experiments done with male Posthumans subjects. Once he was sure that there were no Posthumans in the capsule containment area, he commanded his men emotionlessly, "Go in and retrieve those dead bodies."

After Lin Sanjiu threw the corpse at the net, the security guard's body was now on the conveyor track. A soldier acknowledged his command and before that man left, Aliba suddenly stopped him, "Aim the sentry guns at Contestant 97's capsule. All of you must wear your full armor."

He had always been a cautious man. He never ever let his guard down, regardless of how weak their opponents looked. However, Aliba exercised more caution than necessary this time. Lin Sanjiu stood in her capsule watching the soldiers carrying the dead bodies out. He noticed her behavior and decided that they had to be wary of her. He knew that it was improbable for her to be a willing participant. But if she really planned to resist them and escape, this was her best chance, yet she was just letting it slip...

[What is this female mutate thinking?] Just when this thought surfaced in his mind, Aliba's gaze fell on the corpses his men had retrieved from the capsule containment area. They all died by different methods. Some of them had their heads severed, while others had blood pouring out from their entire body. It was as if it wasn't done by a single person. Aliba saw the purple bruise on the security guard's ankle and turned to ask his men, "When is Contestant 97's entering the battle arena?"

The vice chief was wearing a monocle and after pressing a few buttons on the frame, he replied respectfully, "She will be entering tomorrow morning's first match."

"Arrange for a Grade 2 combatant to join. She must not survive tomorrow. If she has any sponsors, see if we can cancel their

requests. I don't care if they want to sensationalize this, but it will save us a lot of unnecessary worries."

The vice chief gave an affirmative response and started recording the details of their case. Suddenly, they heard a faint sound of an explosion. It probably wasn't far as they quickly felt the tremor it generated. Aliba reached out to support the vice chief that nearly fell on him, his expression changed as he yelled, "Quick! We need to go back to the Tournament Committee's meeting room!"

Before he finished his sentence, he already pushed away his vice chief and shot out of the door. His speed might even be comparable to some posthumans. The vice chief was so anxious that his skinny face had already turned white. He gathered the men and rushed out. One of the soldiers shouted from behind, "Sir, what do I do with this woman?" But no one heard him.

When he looked up again, his supervisor was nowhere to be seen. At such a critical point, Aliba had already forgotten about Xueqin. The tournament arena and the Tournament Committee's office building were close to each other. When he reached the two-story building, his face had turned green.

Even though it was a two-story building, one would discover that the tournament committee's office was technically only one large room. The ceiling was at least six to seven meters and many white translucent balls were floating at random in midair. The usually pristine white balls were now covered by a layer of dirt and concrete debris.

Aliba had a stiff expression on his face as he slowly looked upwards. The wall that concealed the metal safe had already been totally destroyed by the explosion. Aliba could see the cold metallic surface of the safe which hung from the ceiling. It looked as if something had taken a large bite from it and it was missing a large portion. The edges of the bite were very smooth. From the hole, he could see that the safe had been emptied and nothing was left behind.

"This, this..." the vice chief was so stunned that he couldn't even speak properly. The safe contained various Special Items the police department had confiscated over the recent years and that was no small number. Other than the army, many politicians and men in power were all avid collectors of Special Items. The items also held a lot of research value. Now, they have lost everything.

"Review the footage from the security cameras immediately. You have ten minutes to get the photo of the culprits' face and information about their whereabouts. Send out five search parties. No, ten. I don't think a normal person can find this safe..." Aliba looked up at the broken safe. He didn't move for a long time, staring at it as his eyes gradually turned bloodshot. "Remember, we need to keep this a secret. Don't report this to management. We can't let anyone else know about this."

The management was one thing, but if the people from the government heard about that, they would definitely make a ruckus. The vice chief knew that this was a serious issue. He nodded solemnly and started creating search groups.

This has been a tumultuous night for all of them. Unfortunately, the two men in the footage from the security camera seemed to have disappeared without a trace, like froth in the big ocean. As the police department had to act discreetly, they quickly withdrew their men before dawn, after a few hours of fruitless search. Even though the men returned before the sun rose, after they assembled, were reprimanded, returned their weapons and returned to their dormitories to change out of their uniforms, it was already around 8 pm.

As Long Ahtao had to deal with the dead bodies from the arena, he had a tougher time than his other colleagues. When he pushed open the door of his room, all he felt were his aching shoulders.

His roommate was holding a bucket of tidbit and sitting in a chair, since he was from another platoon and was off from work today. A beam from his headband projected a screen on the wall.

Long Ahtao peeped at the screen and saw the opening intro of the Lunar New Year Tournament program. He looked at the time and realized that the morning match was about to start.

"Hey, why don't you take a seat and we can watch this together?" his roommate shouted, spraying bits of food from his mouth.

Usually, Long Ahtao would definitely respond with a grin and drag his chair over, but last night's operation took a toll on him. He waved his hand tiredly, and plopped into his bed. His head felt so heavy that he just wanted to sleep. His roommate looked at his condition and turned back to the screen. As sleep slowly overtook his senses, he heard the faint voice coming from the head projector on his roommate's head, "It is finally time for Contestant 97 to enter the arena. As you all know, she was the first voluntary contestant of the competition in all these years..."

Long Ahtao forced himself to open his eyes and saw the close-up image of the female Posthuman he saw yesterday. He wanted to find out what was up with that woman but he could not fight off his exhaustion and closed his eyes once again.

Meanwhile, the arena was filled with a screaming audience as Lin Sanjiu stepped out of her capsule expressionlessly.

Out of all the other women around her, she noticed that she had seen one of them the night before. That woman was lucky because Lin Sanjiu managed to save her before one of the men got to her.

Although her face was pale and her muscles were still twitching, her eyes showed that her mind was still clear. She moved toward Lin Sanjiu and said softly, "My name is Li Tao. Thank you for saving me last night. What are you planning next? Why didn't you escape yesterday?"

"I have a plan, but I can't implement it alone," Lin Sanjiu whispered after looking at her for a while.

Chapter 123: Sweet Revenge! But, Is Lin Sanjiu Crazy?

Li Tao said nothing. Instead, she raised her brow and retained that expression for quite some time. Lin Sanjiu looked at her, feeling slightly awkward. After Lin Sanjiu told Li Tao her plan, both of them fell into an indescribable silence. The prison van they had seen every day would be reaching the arena soon. The duoluozhongs who survived the previous matches had also gathered together waiting for a command.

Lin Sanjiu knew that her plan was a little too simple but she still couldn't help urging Li Tao softly, "Hey, why don't you just comment on it or something?"

If Li Tao's expression could be described in words, it probably meant "You call that a plan?" However, she suddenly turned around and shouted, "What do you all think?"

Lin Sanjiu was surprised to discover that, at some point in time, the other three female contestants had surrounded them and heard her proposal. Compared to Li Tao, the three other women looked more helpless and terrified. One of the women, with an old-fashioned student hairstyle, facepalmed herself before looking up with a face filled with doubt, "Are you sure you can keep your word?"

"That's too reckless. I, I can't..." a petite woman in her mid-thirties muttered dishearteningly to herself while she looked at the howling duoluozhongs near them and held her own arm to comfort herself. Yet, she approached Lin Sanjiu, unconsciously.

"If I didn't plan to hold onto this plan, I would have no reason to bring it up." Lin Sanjiu nodded to the both of them. Her eyes swept past the remaining woman who did not make any comment, "But, if you decide to join me, then I won't allow you to give up halfway."

Once she said that, the last woman interjected, "I understand that we should help each other, but why do we still have to..."

"Don't ask why!" Lin Sanjiu suddenly raised her voice, the woman was so startled that she stopped speaking. Lin Sanjiu took a deep breath and turned her attention to the prison van which was opening. "If you want me to protect you, you must accept that condition!"

The three women didn't say a word but Lin Sanjiu was slightly astonished by Li Tao's reaction. Li Tao scrutinized her for a few seconds and suddenly said, "I'll join."

Her voice was a little shaky but it was clear as day.

Once the first person agreed, it was easy for the rest to follow suit. While the three other women told her their names, Lin Sanjiu nodded at Li Tao gratefully.

"What's the matter?" one of the audience member sitting in the first row of the VIP seats grumbled disgruntledly. As his voice escaped from the speaker of his helmet, it had a buzzing quality, "What are they discussing? Why aren't they afraid?"

In previous years, by this time in the tournament, the female contestants would usually show signs of a nervous breakdown after witnessing the horrendous fates of the contestants before them. Typically, in other apocalyptic worlds, people only need the will to live and a bit of luck to withstand and survive the new pressures. Ironically, it might sometimes be easier to destroy a person's sanity through the pure wickedness, driven by hedonistic pursuits, lurking within the Garden of Eden.

Perhaps, it could be better described in this manner: if humans were like computers, surviving two wholly different environments would require two different 'operating systems'. Not many people possessed both systems, so the audience in the Garden of Eden was often entertained—but things were different this year. Ever since Contestant 97 whispered something to another contestant, the

atmosphere in the arena suddenly changed for some reason, and it was not a welcomed change.

The person sitting beside the grumbling man kept quiet for a moment, and suddenly laughed, "Yeah." His gentle and crisp voice had a way of lifting people's moods. The grumbling man looked at him but couldn't see the person's appearance because of his mask, so he just turned back to the area and immediately exclaimed, "Oh! It is a Grade 2 combatant! One of the sponsors must have spent a lot!"

At that moment, Lin Sanjiu stepped forward and stared hard at the person who walked down from the prison van. Even among the gruesome-looking duoluozhongs, the recent addition had a distinctive look—it had been a male posthuman... once.

There were two black empty sockets where his eyes once were; his body was covered with countless knife scars, surgical scars, and needle marks. He was like an over-experimented lab rat. When the person turned his head, everyone could see that he had no hair—or more accurately, he didn't even have a skull. Instead, he had a large beetle-shaped machine with blinking lights embedded in his head.

"You can now see one of the products developed by Garden of Eden Laboratories. It is a type of mutate called, "Grade 2 Combatant"... As you all know, male mutates are used for experiments, just like the one we have here today..."

Lin Sanjiu's heart froze for a second. Before this, she thought that only female Posthumans were treated with such cruelty, but if she gave it more thought, they could only develop effective technology and methods to deal with Posthumans if they tested them on actual human subjects.

Every time the male Posthuman moved, the beetle-like machine would blink once. Even though he already lost both his eyes, Lin Sanjiu felt that he was assessing the current situation of the match

especially when those cavernous holes were directed at her.

Li Tao's close-up appeared on the large screen and the host cheerfully introduced her sponsor. The details mentioned were similar to the other sponsorships, being just as nauseating and sadistic. However, when Lin Sanjiu wanted to say something to her, she realized that there was a smile on Li Tao's pale face.

"Don't worry," she wiped the tears from the corner of her eyes, "If I win, I will let those sponsor eat sh*t."

In this match, only Li Tao and that woman with the student hairstyle, Dong Haohao, had sponsors. This was also the reason why the large group of duoluozhongs headed for both of them when the air horn was sounded.

When Lin Sanjiu was in her capsule, she did really feel how intense it was. But when she experienced it herself, it was a whole different story.

The ground was slippery as it was smeared with blood and flesh, and each step she took was accompanied by wet squishy sounds. The stench of blood overwhelmed her sense of smell, and the sharp screeches made by her opponents hurt her ears. The ground shook when the duoluozhongs moved, making it difficult to even stand properly. Although she told herself rationally that there were only about a few dozen duoluozhongs, when she looked around, they seemed to occupy every corner of the battle arena.

Lin Sanjiu used her mouthpart weapon like a whip and struck a duoluozhong lunging toward Dong Haohao. The sharp edges of the mouthpart combined with her new-found strength tore off a large limb from the duoluozhong, which no one could identify. "Three of us should surround the two of them with sponsors! Quick! First, let's make sure they are not caught!"

The petite woman with short hair was called Xu Wei. She immediately agreed and held her fists in front of her. She quickly punched away a duoluozhong which had rushed in front of Li Tao.

The last woman, Bai Xiaoke, jumped to Dong Haohao's side and yelled loudly at Lin Sanjiu, "If I'm killed here, I swear I'll get you even if I become a ghost!"

Lin Sanjiu smiled smugly and elbowed another duoluozhong so violently that its face was smashed, "Don't worry. I will die before you!"

Before Bai Xiaoke could regain her balance, a few duoluozhongs howled and turned on her, that scared her so much that she could only close her eyes... Then, a muscular arm appeared in front of her and toppled the duoluozhongs. Bai Xiaoke, who had regained her composure, threw a glance at the tall man beside her.

[The Queen's Virile Escort]

Even though it has an appearance of a man, it is actually a product of an ability. According to the difficulty of the command given to the escort, it will grow smaller and smaller with each command, like a bar of soap (huh?), until it disappears. The queen needs to maintain a "craving for dashing young men" to successfully summon the next escort.

PS: Besides using it for combat, you can do whatever you want with it.

Lin Sanjiu was startled when a large man suddenly appeared near them. Just when she realized that that was Bai Xiaoke's ability, Li Tao suddenly shouted behind her, "Dodge!"

Lin Sanjiu instantly remembered the male Posthuman who she had lost sight of since the beginning of the match. She could hear the incoming attack but she couldn't dodge because there was someone behind her. If she dodged now, as long as one of the women was hurt, this makeshift party that was just formed would immediately dissolve.

She turned around and found that the two cavernous sockets were now very close to her. The two sockets suddenly appeared

distorted as they emitted a glaring white beam which swallowed Lin Sanjiu the next second.

[Lone Wolf Casual-smart Leather Belt Protection] was immediately activated. The remaining 67% protection charge, left behind by Sandwhale, was rapidly being consumed but there was no sign that the white beam was fading off. As the others were busy fending off duoluozhongs, they couldn't help her. Even if they were able to free themselves from the tussle, they did not know how they could help. Everyone in their group became anxious.

"Looks like our Contestant 97 will have to say goodbye soon..." When the host was in the middle of his sentence, Lin Sanjiu heard her belt cracking. It broke into a few pieces and fell off her waist. At the same time, the white beam finally disappeared.

Her body was drenched in cold sweat. She checked her body, glad to find herself still in one piece. Seeing that his attack failed, the male Posthuman leaped away and hid among the duoluozhongs.

"What was that?" Xu Wei asked with a trembling voice.

Lin Sanjiu had no idea but it was clearly a problem. Versu Poison was so lethal that it could kill a person within seconds, but it only used up a tiny percentage of the protection charge on the belt. On the other hand, her opponent destroyed the belt in a few seconds. She couldn't help wondering how many lives it could have taken.

"What should we do? If he's going to do that again..." Li Tao was standing in the middle of their formation. She swung her hands in the air and before a duoluozhong got close, it fell to the ground with a thud.

[N.Heller's Filler Writing Ability]

When necessary, an obscure web novelist has the god-level ability to write 6300 Chinese in one go without advancing the plot. This skill can be extracted by the reader, and converted into a good

method to delay one's opponent—your opponent won't make a move even after a long, long time.

PS: This ability can be used on multiple targets. But with more targets, the effective delay would be shorter. The maximum delay is three seconds. This ability can be used five times per day.

Xu Wei was very scared but with companions backing her up, she stepped forward and forcefully punched a duoluozhong's head.

After her close encounter with death, Lin Sanjiu steadied her racing heart and roared, "Let's get rid of all the duoluozhongs first. Without these things blocking our way, we can at least evade his attacks! But we need to be quick! We need to do this before his next attack!

An attack like that definitely required a cooldown period or required charging; if he could use it continuously, he wouldn't have to retreat.

"But there are too many of them!" One of the duoluozhongs spat out a green fluid which brushed past Dong Haohao's body. Her clothes melted instant and white smoke rose from her skin. Enduring her pain and tears, she shouted out, "My ability isn't good for fighting!"

Ever since the match started, many duoluozhongs have been incapacitated, whereas Dong Haohao only received a small wound. When they saw the white smoke, the audience's dissatisfaction exploded. They stood up hollering, brandishing their flags, throwing things around... Almost everyone was jeering and cursing, egging the duoluozhongs and the 2nd Grade combatant to put in more effort to catch one of the women.

Lin Sanjin gave the audience a threatening glare and yelled something to Li Tao, and her voice was quickly drowned out by all the noise surrounding them.

Li Tao stopped slowly, her gaze swept past her companions and it

finally stopped on the ground not far from them. In the semifluid mess of blood and flesh, she saw the white eyeball which couldn't be destroyed. It was just there, watching the sky.

[Let's go with this.] Li Tao bit her lower lip. "You will have the ability to summon all the vengeful spirits who died in this arena so that they can enact their revenge."

Once she finished her sentence softly, the bandage around Lin Sanjiu's neck grew warm. Lin Sanjiu's Pygmalion Choker had been activated.

Noticing that something was wrong, the commotion within the arena gradually died down. If it weren't for the electrical net, the eerie, howling wind within the battle arena would have pulled down the hoods of the audience members sitting in the VIP section. Piercing wails filled the entire battle arena as dark shadows appeared suddenly and began to take on the forms of numerous dead contestants.

There were those which Lin Sanjiu recognized and those that were totally unfamiliar; some had missing limbs and others who looked perfectly well. The numbers were far beyond a few dozens, probably because the vengeful spirits from the past tournaments were also summoned. Lin Sanjiu could feel her stamina being drained, her eyes wavered a little when she saw Xinyi's face.

It was just a head floating in the air. The girl's body had been so thoroughly violated that it wouldn't return even after she became a 'ghost'. Lin Sanjiu felt her eyes watering, but she held back her tears and screamed, "GO!"

Finally. The spirits washed over the duoluozhongs like a massive wave, drowning them in a sea of ectoplasm. The duoluozhongs shrieked and struggled but they were quickly swallowed. Finally, they had this opportunity...

Their hatred thrust the battle arena into darkness, and amidst the dark shadows, a beam of white light shone through a few times

before it disappeared. The panicked host tried to say something but he just couldn't. Before the five-minute activation limit was reached, all the duoluozhongs had been defeated. Some of their bodies were still twitching.

With all the duoluozhongs dead, the spirits wailed again and assaulted the electric net in waves. Their attack was so violent that the faces of the audience beneath their masks were turning pale; the people who previously called out so fervently for Posthumans to be killed, couldn't help scrambling out of their seats and heading for the exit. But the electric net withstood their blows, and the spirits disappeared into smoke, one after the other, as if they were burnt by the net. The audience was only assured after seeing that.

The five minutes was almost up. The innumerable spirits in the arena turned back and flew toward the five contestants. Lin Sanjiu was stunned but quickly felt the chilling shadows passing through her body.

"Thank you." Lin Sanjiu heard a whisper, but she wasn't sure if it was Xinyi or the other spirits. When she opened her eyes, she found that the arena was still brightly lit.

There was total silence. Everyone was looking at the five women who were standing still and the floor of the battle arena which was smeared with blood, guts and torn limbs.

Even the host was dumbfounded. He did not know what comments to make.

As silence hung in the air, Lin Sanjiu could hear the breathing sounds from the people behind her, so she looked around the battle arena anxiously.

That male Posthuman must still be alive. Ignoring her tired muscles, she activated her [No coincidence. No story], and surveyed her surroundings. Though she couldn't use the full potential of that ability, it was still useful. She immediately spotted

some movements under a mashed up pile of white remains.

Lin Sanjiu held her breath and she walked toward the pile soundlessly. She raised her mouthpart weapon...

Her weapon struck and shattered the beetle-like machine first. Then, pale yellow brain fluid sprayed out from his head. Before he took his last breath, Lin Sanjiu vaguely heard him uttering, "Lil' sis."

[Did he see his sister amongst the spirits?]

Lin Sanjiu kept her mouthpart weapon and walked back to her companions. A small camera which had been circling the arena from the top flew down discreetly and zoomed in to film her expression.

"Why aren't you speaking, Mr. host?" Lin Sanjiu grinned. The large screen showed the blood stains on her face clearly. "Let me announce the outcome of this match on your behalf."

"We won this match. We are not withdrawing. All of us will continue and participate in the next match."

"We are not mutates! We are Posthumans! We are Posthumans who are superior to you!"

This was Lin Sanjiu's plan. She wanted to stay in the tournament to help the other contestants survive. The condition she set for the other women was that anyone who received her help would have to continue fighting in the tournament.

At that moment, the last two sentence raised hell in the entire Garden of Eden, but Lin Sanjiu couldn't care less. The large screen quickly changed to show the host's face. After hesitating for a moment, Lin Sanjiu crouched down.

"What's wrong? Are you hurt?" Li Tao asked urgently.

The other women were still confused by the situation. They couldn't process the fact that they had won the match. Meanwhile,

Lin Sanjiu regained her focus after crouching down.

"No, I am alright." Lin Sanjiu seemed uncharacteristically indecisive, "Don't look at me, you will be grossed out."

Li Tao stared questioningly at Lin Sanjiu with her bright eyes.

Lin Sanjiu took a deep breath and suddenly grabbed a piece of duoluozhong's remain. She placed it in her mouth and sucked the blood from it. Her brows knitted tightly when she tasted the odd, disgusting liquid. Her throat shuddered as if she was about to vomit. Yet, in the end, she drank all the blood she could.

She covered her mouth, stood up with her pale face and glared at the entire populace of Garden of Eden who was shocked by her antics once again.

Chapter 124: A Slight Modification

"Motherf*ckers! Why didn't you arrange for more Grade 2 Combatants?"

As Aliba, the chief of police, bellowed at the highest white ball in the office, a large number of office supplies flew out noisily from a desk and crashed to the ground along with their owner's anger.

"Good-for-nothing! You can't even deal with one mutate right there in your palm! You're a f*cking disgrace!" Aliba continued scolding. The translucent white ball displayed the view of a man bowing, it was the vice chief with the monocle.

The other round balls beneath it quickly moved further away.

"Chief. It's... It's all because of those people from the lab, their asking price is too high..." Noticing that his superior haven't responded, he carefully added, "Considering that we still need to buy more Grade 1 and Grade 2 combatants and we have to hire their warriors, the cost..."

The most important thing was that the profits from the tickets, sponsors, etc. would actually be used as bonuses for the Military and Police Department. As expected, Aliba turned his anger to his long-time rivals.

"F*ck! Those ungrateful b*stards! If I didn't send them those mutate and special items, how would they be able to research sh*t?" After receiving two blows in this short amount of time, his furious expression was enough to make his men fidget. "Those assh*les from the Technology Department, I will make them participants for the tournament someday!"

He stopped for a while and inhaled sharply, "Cut the bonuses this year, and get more Grade 2 combatants. We need Contestant 97 dead!"

The vice chief quickly nodded. In the previous years, the Military

and Police Department was never this strapped for cash. Special Items were extremely rare and they could usually exchange a few items for a batch of Grade 2 combatants, but this year...

When Aliba remembered the theft, he fell heavily into his chair and sighed, "Did you get any information about the two culprits who broke into our safe?"

The vice chief did not dare to even say "no", he shook his head anxiously and before his superior flared up again, he quickly continued, "But when I was dealing with the woman called Xue Qin, I suddenly remembered something..."

Aliba looked up and sat up straight once he heard this, waiting for his vice chief to continue.

And, indeed, they rarely received calls in the middle of the night, but there was one involving a civilian reporting that a female mutate was hiding in the city. After that, the items from the safe were stolen while they dealt with her. This was too much of a coincidence, so they must be related.

Xue Qin was dumped onto an aerial work platform and brought to their office. Her entire body was covered with swollen bruises and she was beaten so badly that it was impossible to recognize her. Actually, she was surprised that she was still alive. Xue Qin laid on the ground, staring with listless eyes. Her body was bound, and she showed no expression.

"How did you get that [Lu Xun Exclusive Similar Styled Sponge]?" Aliba questioned unhurriedly, his anger had already subsided.

Xue Qin had heard this question countless times during her interrogation but she clenched her teeth and refused to say a word. Aliba wasn't surprised by her silence. He looked at Xue Qin's wounded body before pressing a few buttons on the wall. A hologram of a recording of a telephone conversation appeared in midair. It showed a hooded man whose features couldn't be seen clearly due to the dark surroundings but his voice was discernible,

"Yes, she was heading west from Sadema Street... Are you sending men here immediately? Don't let her get away."

Although the speaker intentionally deepened his voice, Xue Qin rapidly lifted her head to look at the image when she heard that voice and started trembling.

Aliba smiled when he saw her reaction.

30 minutes later...

Lie Ming shifted his body a little reluctantly as he whispered to the person beside him, "Are we watching the next match? I am still worried about them... Sigh, I don't know what these guys will do to Contestant 97."

"We're not watching this anymore, let's go," the person replied with a light-hearted tone which ironically sounded very cold. "What happened just now was just a fluke. If we continue watching, we will only be disappointed."

The two men didn't attract much attention when they stood up and left their VIP seats. That was because everyone was more focused on discussing about the match that just ended. The events which unfolded were now the hot topic of discussion in every entertainment news, talk show, and social media in Garden of Eden. In the 28 years, there were other instances where the female Posthuman contestants won. In fact, as long as a contestant survived a match, they would be considered the winner of that match. However, this was the first time that a contestant dared to bravely stand in the battle arena and confront the entire Garden of Eden.

"Superior to us? She's just dreaming... Look at where we are sitting and where they are!"

"Well, she doesn't know that matches after the 50th contestant are way harsher than those before... I can't wait to see how Contestant 97 will cry and beg to be let out in the next match..."

"Did you drink that duoluozhong's blood to threaten us?"

Whether it was the large screen in the arena or the small screen on the wrists, public figures of all appearances and voices were commenting about the same matter. After walking through the commotion, Gong Daoyi suddenly stopped before even reaching the exit. He bought a hot dog from a small stall nearby and turned back. Lei Ming was just about to question Gong Daoyi when he took a quick look at the exit and immediately understood. At that moment, he realized that suddenly some soldiers appeared to guard the exit. Those soldiers were demanding each passing person to reveal their face and each of them had a portrait on the screens of their wristband which looked very similar to Gong Daoyi.

"Oh really. I didn't expect them to find out so quickly." Gong Daoyi returned to his seat holding a hot dog but he did not know how he could eat with his mask on so he just gave the hot dog to Lei Ming. "It must be that woman."

Lei Ming held the hot dog and frowned, "Crap. What should we do?"

"Let's just go along with it. Since we can't leave now, we might as well watch the next match... If it is disappointing, it is fate and it wasn't my choice to watch it..." Lei Ming couldn't see Gong Daoyi's expression because of his mask, but he heard the man mumbling.

Lei Ming really couldn't understand Gong Daoyi's logic sometimes but since he already said that, Lei Ming could only sit down nervously.

"Um, how do I eat this?"

"If I knew, would I give it to you?"

Lei Ming was flabbergasted. He wanted to look around but a stern voice on the large screen quickly drew his attention. Next, the chief of police, Aliba, appeared on the screen. This was followed by cheers from the audience. "The Committee finds the

camaraderie that Contestant 97 displays very interesting. For everyone to enjoy this interesting experience, we decided on a slight modification..."

When Lin Sanjiu heard the word, "modification", her heart skipped a beat. She was afraid that what she was most worried about was actually going to happen.

The rules to the Lunar New Year Tournament were decided by the organizers after all. Since they made the rules, they were also entitled to change it anytime they wanted. If they really did so, the fate of the remaining contestants would once again be unpredictable.

Lin Sanjiu could only count on one thing—that the Tournament Committee would be too proud to admit their blunder, and too proud to change their rules. She could feel that the women in the capsules beside hers were looking at her anxiously. She bit her lips and held her breath as she listened to Aliba's announcement, "According to what Contestant 97 declared, the ten female mutates will unite in the next match. Isn't that touching? Thus, the Committee has decided that we will add a female mutate with limited motor function into the next match. Let's hope that Contestant 97 and her companions would reach consensus regarding how they should deal with that special female mutate..."

Before Aliba finished his sentence, Lin Sanjiu felt her legs grow weak and she fell to the bottom of the capsule. Her muscles were starting to ache and her vision was blurring. She was all too familiar with this feeling. She summoned her Nostradamus's Card eagerly and transferred the radiation in her body into the card. Lin Sanjiu successfully absorbed the radiation within the duoluozhong's body by drinking its blood.

The small battery symbol on the card showed a lightning sign for a while and the number on the battery increased to 16%. The duoluozhongs were indeed products of the radiation. Lin Sanjiu only drank a little blood, but the radiation in that small amount of

blood was far beyond what normal humans could withstand, but it might not be enough...

After she felt her fatigue ebbing, Lin Sanjiu supported herself with the walls of the capsule while watching the new female posthuman the organizers brought in.

The bloody remains in the battle arena had been removed, perhaps to alleviate the fears the residents had after seeing the spirits in the previous match, but there were still spots of blood stains on the floor. A soldier walked into the battle arena with a motionless woman on his shoulder, he threw the ragdoll-like body on the ground and left.

The woman's limbs were all twisted in some weird angle, definitely broken. She seemed to be unconscious but her face and body was so swollen that one of her eyes was half-opened.

The second match of the day was starting. The woman on the floor shuddered a little when she heard the capsules being transported into the battle arena. Lin Sanjiu walked out of her capsule and looked at the other nine women.

Compared to the women fighting in the previous matches, the mental state of the additional five women looked visibly better. A woman with gentle eyes gave a grateful nod to Lin Sanjiu. Meanwhile, a 14-year-old teenager moved closer to Lin Sanjiu. Although the girl seemed very scared, there was a hint of hope in her eyes. The nine women unconsciously gathered around Lin Sanjiu, waiting for her to say something.

"I wouldn't say anything unnecessary." After Lin Sanjiu reviewed what happened in the previous match, she finally concluded, "You just need to remember, all of you must stay after the end of the match to help the contestants fighting tomorrow."

With the number of contestants increasing with each match, it might not be enough to aggravate the residents, but at least it would help ensure that the remaining contestants would survive

and not end up like Xinyi and the others.

A girl with a nest-like hair actually cried after hearing what Lin Sanjiu said, most likely because she realized that she had the chance of survival because the people from the previous match kept their promise. She nodded so vigorously that the others feared her head might fall off.

While the women snivelled and agreed, Lin Sanjiu was a little surprised and touched because none of the women brought up the idea of abandoning the unknown woman. Perhaps, undergoing this nightmarish experience brought out the tenacity in them. Even Bai Xiaoke suggested, "I can get my escort to protect her..."

But a feeble voice suddenly interrupted her, "I don't need your help—"

Lin Sanjiu turned behind and realized that the woman on the ground had opened her eyes. Tears rolled down her face as she gritted her teeth and continued, "All of you mutates are bad people! I don't need your help!"

Chapter 125: Losing the Ability to Move at a Critical Juncture

Long Ahtao's roommate felt that he was very odd today. Long Ahtao had never missed a single match in all the previous tournaments. He would even save his salary, that little amount he had, to buy tickets for a few days of matches to watch it live. It was rare for Long Ahtao to skip watching the morning match, but the weirdest thing was that he barely replied after hearing the outrageous outcome of that match.

"Hey, what's wrong?" His roommate finally put down his bucket of snacks and walked to Long Ahtao's bedside. "The female mutates actually won, did you hear what I said?"

Long Ahtao acknowledged with a soft sound, sounding very sick.

The roommate pulled him over roughly and was taken aback, "You have a fever?"

Long Ahtao's face was scathing hot. He closed his barely open eyes and blood poured from his nose. A lock of hair fell from his head onto his roommate's hand, and the roommate shook it away in disgust and cleaned his hands on Long Ahtao's clothes. After the roommate considered for a moment, he decided to call the medic.

"The match is starting. I don't want to go. It's just a fever. I can wait until the end of the match!" he quickly retorted as the screen went black.

His roommate grabbed that bucket of snacks and went back to his seat. He switched on the screen showing the live broadcast of the tournament and began eating his chicken popcorn guiltlessly as he felt that he had already done as much as he could as a roommate.

After watching for two minutes, he finally understood the intention of the Committee. Even though he couldn't hear the discussion between the contestants, he could see that they were

arguing.

"But, she is a resident of Garden of Eden!" Dong Haohao voice grew sharp as she continued emotionally, "My ability isn't good for combat, I didn't risk my life to continue to this match to protect a resident of this place!"

Xu Wei and the others did not say anything but they seemed to agree with her. Lin Sanjiu looked at Li Tao. Li Tao sighed and looked downward with her black puppy-like eyes, saying, "She means us no harm..."

"Yes, that's what I mean." Lin Sanjiu sighed in relief after she received support from Li Tao. She threw a glance at the woman on the ground. "I understand where you guys are coming from, but those drugged duoluozhongs wouldn't care if she has sponsors or where she is from..."

Sometimes, when the duoluozhongs were unable to catch the sponsored contestant, they would just grab another person to meet their sexual craving. This has happened quite a few times over the days and there was no way Lin Sanjiu would allow any woman to be treated that way if she was around.

She had not even finished what she wanted to say, she was still thinking about how she could convince the other women when suddenly she heard someone gasping. The atmosphere immediately changed. Lin Sanjiu looked toward where the others were staring and saw three black prison vans.

Since the start of the tournament, this was the first time that three prison vans arrived instead of one.

The audience was ecstatic. They cheered and whistled. The atmosphere was radically different and there was no sign of that uneasiness they showed in the morning. "Dear audience, do you see the prison vans? Even your host is surprised by this! We can only expect an exciting and entertaining show this afternoon!" The host spoke with a high-spirited voice as if to compensate for his

speechless reaction in the morning match. When the doors of the prison van opened, the host started his enthusiastic introduction, "Oh! Look, the duoluozhongs in the first prison van are different from the ones before. Each of them looks really fierce... Haha, how ferocious! They look like they will rush over even before the match starts..."

Just as the host described, this batch of duoluozhongs were all taller than two meters and looked very similar to each other. Sinews covered their necks and there wasn't a single strand of hair on their pointed pale heads. They each had a gruesome appendage dangling between their legs, enough to give a person nightmares for days.

"Don't be scared. They are just duoluozhongs," Lin Sanjiu consoled the women behind her.

The youngest girl trembled and did not even dare to look straight at them, instead she stared at Lin Sanjiu's back as though it would help her calm down a bit.

The first and second prison vans were filled with numerous duoluozhongs. They rushed out from the vehicles when the doors were opened. Afterwards, the expressions of the women turned grim as five Grade 2 combatants walked down from the third prison van. They looked different but they all had harrowing scars left behind by the countless experiments done on them. All five of them had eyes, but they were staring vacantly as they were controlled by the beetle-like machinery embedded in their heads.

When Lin Sanjiu saw this, her face turned white.

"Just as before, we will take a circular formation. The sponsored contestants will fight from behind and those who have support abilities are to stay in the center to provide help." Lin Sanjiu calmed her racing heart and spoke with a decisive tone. At this point, she did not have the mood to debate with the women, "We will surround the woman on the ground."

Once she said that, Lin Sanjiu rushed to take the foremost position. Under such circumstances, no one else argued against her. Xu Wei and Li Tao quickly went to Lin Sanjiu's side and the others surrounded the incapacitated woman to protect her.

"You all should concentrate on getting rid of the duoluozhongs. I will deal with the Grade 2 Combatants. If I die, someone must take over this position!" Lin Sanjiu quickly shouted to the others after she heard the starting horn. She tore off some material from the bottom of her pants and wrapped her fists. Next, she activated her [A Twinkle in the Sky].

Compared to the previous matches, their opponents had somewhat of a fighting strategy this time. One of the Grade 2 combatants rushed forward leading the large group of duoluozhongs. The entire arena was filled with a tsunami of roaring voices, it was impossible to discern which voices belonged to the human audience and which belonged to the duoluozhongs. In a few short seconds, the duoluozhongs were right in front of the female contestants. The strong nauseating stench from the duoluozhongs swiftly followed.

Seeing the large number of duoluozhongs charging forward like a raging rapid, Lin Sanjiu overcome her urge to evade and turned behind, yelling, "I will leave them to you guys!" She sprinted forward nimbly, aiming for the Grade 2 combatant in the middle while ignoring everything else. She immediately found herself amidst a sea of duoluozhongs.

Xu Wei and Li Tao, who were behind her, instantly activated their abilities and blasted away several duoluozhongs. However, these duoluozhongs were much stronger than those in the previous match, so many of them could survive that attack and continued stretching their white arms, trying to grab the contestants. But before they could get close, they fell to the ground one after the other, as if something had tripped them. Then, they were suddenly dragged by an invisible force. They shrieked as they were pulled

away from the battle arena until they hit the electric net and were electrocuted to death.

The girl with the nest-like hair exhaled quietly.

[Patriotic Fervor]

"Is it right for the Government to do this? Are we talking about the rule of man or rule of law? If we want our country to progress, how can we just go along with this sort of authoritative governance? Ah, wait for me, I have to answer my door to get a delivery..."

After that, the person never appeared again... This weird phenomenon of people disappearing after they answer the door to collect a delivery or for a water utility employee have been converted to an ability.

Description: After choosing a hostile target, the ability will interrupt his current action and the target will be dragged far away.

PS: The target must be within 2,000 m. Being dragged by the ability does not cause any damage to the target. If you want to reach the effectiveness of the Public Security Bureau, please wait for your next level up. A maximum of three targets can be chosen each time. During this process, the user must not move.

This ability was actually only useful for escaping—however, taking advantage of the high voltage electric net surrounding the battle arena, that girl with the nest hair unexpected managed to use her weak [Patriotic Fervor] to her great advantage. Within a short amount of time, she had already killed off over a dozen duoluozhongs.

Even though the battle situation behind her was in their favor, Lin Sanjiu had gotten herself into quite a conundrum. She didn't expect that she would be unable to use [A Twinkle in the Sky]. When she punched a duoluozhong, it seemed like its tall body was

hit by a great upward force, however, before its feet could leave the ground, it fell back as if restricted by something.

Lin Sanjiu was a little stunned by this and was nearly caught by a duoluozhong. Luckily, Li Tao had been watching her back, so she quickly activated her [N.Heller's Filler Writing Ability] and saved Lin Sanjiu's life.

Due to this unforeseen incident, Lin Sanjiu quickly pulled out her mouthpart weapon. With a few whips, she pushed back the duoluozhongs that were flocking toward her. She finally cleared a path for herself to retreat with much difficulty and ran toward the other women. When the Grade 2 combatant she had been pursuing saw this, it jumped up and flipped over her head, landing right in front of Lin Sanjiu.

The combatant's lackluster, seemingly lifeless eyes were locked on Lin Sanjiu. He slowly opened his mouth and a white beam appeared from his throat. Lin Sanjiu didn't dare to stay a second longer. She let herself fall to the ground and rolled to a side while tossing the material wrapping her hands. She immediately grabbed his ankle.

At almost the same time, the Grade 2 combatant faced downward and targeted the white beam he released from his mouth toward the ground.

Even though Lin Sanjiu speed was fast, she knew she couldn't dodge faster than the white beam. Her heart sank as she anticipated losing one of her legs. Oddly, she didn't feel the pain she expected. Lin Sanjiu looked up and saw Dong Haohao looking at her darkly while screaming, "Quick! I can't hold him back any longer!"

[National Tax Agency]

When an income goes through this mystical place, it is mysteriously reduced... just like an enemy's attack.

Description: When [National Tax Agency] is activated, the first three seconds of an enemy's attack will be taken away, so it will not cause any damage to you or your allies. After three seconds, you can still receive damage from the remaining duration of the attack, just like how your remaining income will be given to you.

Three seconds was enough for Lin Sanjiu. When she rushed into the formation, the Grade 2 combatant suddenly fell and died, as blood poured out of his body only after chasing her for a few steps.

There were still four left... With another whipping attack, she decimated a duoluozhong's lower appendage. While it shrieked in pain, Lin Sanjiu started feeling anxious. Dealing with a Grade 2 combatant was really very risky, she wondered if she could really kill off the other four combatants. Four men walked stiffly out from the crowd of duoluozhongs, as if they had heard her hidden thoughts. Four lifeless-looking eyes stared at her.

The audience suddenly grew quiet, and even the duoluozhongs seemed to move slower. It was as if everyone in the arena was waiting for the four Grade 2 combatants to attack. Beyond anyone's expectation, Lin Sanjiu's knees suddenly weakened and she slipped into a sitting position. Her body started to tremble slightly.

Chapter 126: Lin Sanjiu, the Saint

Never in a million years would Lin Sanjiu imagine that [A Twinkle in the Sky] would level up at this critical juncture. To put it more accurately, she didn't even suspect that it could level up.

After surviving for such a long time in a New World, Lin Sanjiu could vaguely understand the general nature of the abilities. All abilities, regardless whether they were active or passive, could be classified into two types: those which had level ups and those which didn't. For example, Physical Enhancements could level up, improving the ability holder's physical capabilities each time, whereas Extreme Temperature Adaption would not level up, so, if a person with that ability was thrown into an environment of -300°C, he'd still die.

She once discussed with her companions about the basis of this classification, but they couldn't come up with anything concrete. The only thing she was certain about was that the main ability of the ability holder could definitely be improved. For example, Lin Sanjiu's [Planar World] and Hai Tianqing's [The glory of a personal trainer], etc...

As [A Twinkle in the Sky] was taken from another person and had not shown any signs that it would level up, and thus Lin Sanjiu always assumed that it would remain the same. Even if it had levels, how much further could it evolve? After all, it could already send a person flying off into the sky. If it reached the next level, would it mean that it could send someone into space?

Lin Sanjiu struggled while she stretched her arm to reach for her mouthpart weapon which had fallen beside her. Even knowing that it was useless, she didn't want to just wait for death. The others knew how powerful the white beam from the Grade 2 combatants' mouths was, thus they quickly activated whatever abilities they had. Even if the Grade 2 combatants had once been Posthumans which shouldn't be affected by the attacks so easily,

they were still outnumbered. In that moment, they fell and stumbled; one of them even misfired their white beam into a small group of duoluozhongs. When the white beam faded, the duoluozhongs in its path all became smoldering black ash spewing white smoke.

As the nine women focused their attacks on the combatants, a duoluozhong crept close to Lin Sanjiu. Its exhaled a wave of smelly breath in Lin Sanjiu's face while its white hands were about to reach her neck.

For an instant, she heard multiples screams from behind her. Lin Sanjiu held onto her mouthpart weapon, with every intention to whip that disgusting face in front of her to pieces, but she couldn't summon even a bit of strength. She could only lie still while her blood froze.

Just then, a large black shadow behind her stroke with a 'whoosh'. It was like a hefty punch with a power of over ten thousand Newtons. The impact was so huge that when the duoluozhong was flung backward, it knocked down a couple of other duoluozhongs in its path.

The black shadow stopped, and Lin Sanjiu realized that it was a green snake with such a large girth that it would take more than a few people to wrap their arms around it. Even though she couldn't see the snake's head, she could see the sharp yellow thorns which covered its skin. It looked formidable.

Meanwhile, there were horrified screams from the audience. Lin Sanjiu swung her head to look behind and discovered that the large snake originated from the neck of the woman on the floor. At first glance, it was a terrifying image. It was as if a large snake had grown out from her chest cavity.

"My name is Xueqin," the woman laid on the ground, refusing to look at Lin Sanjiu, "I want to thank you for what you've done," she continued breathlessly.

[The housewife haunted by the spirits who had gone under her kitchen knife]

Dear housewives who cook, please be careful from today onwards! Regardless of what you cut when you're cooking, be it chicken, fish, chives or tomato, they could emerge from your body in a "battle-ready form"! But they could be surprisingly effective as weapons! Well, at least when you go to the market next time, you don't have to worry about your neighbor's wife snatching away the cheapest and freshest vegetables!

Description: The ingredients the user used in the last dish she cooked would emerge from her body as a weapon. The weapon could be controlled psionically, but one thing to note is that it will change if the user makes a new dish.

PS: Only the ingredients that were cut by the user would be considered possible options for this ability. If the user dice a few different ingredients at the same time, she can choose from one of them.

"To be honest, this is actually a cucumber," Xueqin sounded a little awkward when she explained that while she still laid her face on the ground.

Lin Sanjiu was certainly a little dazed by this. With the help of the green snake—or rather, cucumber, the other female contestants quickly let out sighs of relief. At the same time, Lin Sanjiu could feel that the condition of her body was stabilizing.

At the end of any leveling up process, there would not be any side effects, but the ability holder would instead feel revitalized. The moment her symptoms disappeared, Lin Sanjiu leaped up and shouted to Xueqin, "I'm counting on you!" After that, with a few bounces and leaps, she chased after the Grade 2 combatant who had just shot out a white beam.

The recharging time the combatants required was never more than 40 seconds, Lin Sanjiu had to grab this opportunity to act. She activated [No coincidence. No story] and immediately spotted her target who was moving rigidly, hiding behind a group of duoluozhongs. She rushed in headfirst without hesitating, scaring the other female contestants behind her. The large cucumber was swept across part of the arena, but it wasn't long enough to reach the duoluozhongs around Lin Sanjiu.

The tall duoluozhongs started howling excitedly as they surrounded Lin Sanjiu and lunged themselves at her. Lin Sanjiu's expression remained the same. She stretched out both her hands, which were somehow wrapped again, and quickly pressed them over many enemies in a row.

She was surrounded by an explosion of blood and flesh in the next second. Blood spurted everywhere, and bloodied flesh, limbs, and body parts would continue raining down for almost a minute.

[A Twinkle in the Sky Dark Version: Mosaic Censorship]

"Enemies are drawn to disappear into the sky to compromise with the censorship restrictions on violent scenes..." Satoshi Akiyama, the editor of a manga magazine thought to himself, he was having a headache after seeing the darker 2.0 version of censorship in the drafts sent by other mangakas.

Description: Did you fail to activate [A Twinkle in the Sky] just moments before? That's right! As the user does not exist in a manga and is bound by the laws of science (huh?), the user is unable to launch their target into the sky when they are indoors or if there is something above their head obstructing possible trajectory paths.

Thus, the leveled-up version of this ability takes on a different style.

When the user places both her hands on the target, [A Twinkle in the Sky] is activated in both hands. As the target is hit by attacks

from two directions, it will instantly dissolve into pixelated mess.

Warning: After activating this ability, please do not hold your own face in your hand, trying to be cute.

Lin Sanjiu was covered with the stench from the shower of blood but she remained composed as she pounced on the Grade 2 combatant and pressed both hands on his body. He had no chance to dodge. His body exploded and innards, flesh, and machinery bits flew into the sky like a small fountain.

Following that, Lin Sanjiu got up and headed for the next combatant. As she made her way to him, she killed off the duoluozhongs in her path, sending their innards and body parts flying everywhere. There was a thick mist of blood in the air, as the ground was covered with several lumps of dismembered body parts. The woman ran forward with a cold face, like a blood-soaked Death God.

The audience members, who were previously ranting and whistling quickly, grew quiet. Everyone in the audience who had been eyeing Lin Sanjiu gradually got cold feet.

Gong Daoyi suddenly snatched the hot dog from Lei Ming's hand and rolled it into a ball in a second.

"Brother Gong, are you angry?" Lei Ming whispered, unable to understand the man beside him.

It took Gong Daoyi a while before he replied, as if he suddenly realized that Lei Ming was asking him a question, "Huh? No... I'm not angry. I'm just pumped."

"Yup. It's exciting!" This was the first time Lei Ming felt that he actually grasped Gong Daoyi's logic, and quickly added, "I didn't know Contestant 97 was so good at fighting! It's admirable..."

Gong Daoyi let out a quiet chuckle but quickly stopped himself realizing that it wasn't appropriate here as he looked back at the battle arena, feeling a little embarrassed.

After successfully dodging another white beam attack, Lin Sanjiu had already consecutively killed off three of the five Grade 2 combatants. A large number of duoluozhongs had also been eradicated while the remaining few were still struggling against the other female contestants. But from the looks of things, the outcome of this match was already very obvious.

The remaining two combatants suddenly stopped and strode towards Lin Sanjiu. As they walked, they opened their mouths—they had already finished recharging their power.

Lin Sanjiu stood still, showing no intention to evade the attack.

"What is she doing?" Xueqin asked with her hoarse voice. She wanted to move but with her broken limbs that was not much she could do.

Lin Sanjiu's shouted out the next second, "Dong Haohao, can you still use your ability?"

When Dong Haohao used her [National Tax agency] against that white beam previously, she found that it consumed her stamina like an endless black hole. But Dong Haohao gritted her teeth and replied, "I'll back you up."

Once she finished her sentence, the combatants shot two beams of eye-blinding white light directly at Lin Sanjiu.

She only had three seconds.

With the intensity of the white beam, nobody saw what happened clearly. They only saw a blurry image of Lin Sanjiu sprinting towards the combatants. The white beams began to vibrate violently, affecting everyone's vision. Just when Dong Haohao was at her limit, the white beams suddenly disappeared. When she narrowed her eyes and looked up, she saw that Lin Sanjiu had already taken down both combatants.

She pressed the face of one of the combatants onto the floor and signaled for one of the flying cameras with her jaw. A camera flew

down and gave her a close-up. The audience glued their eyes to the large screen.

Tiny droplets of blood rolled down the lens of the camera as Lin Sanjiu spoke. "This person was once a Posthuman so I am not going to kill him. Take him back!"

The entire arena went silent as she said those unexpected words —[She's not going to kill other Posthumans? But she had already killed three of them in such a gruesome manner.]

But Contestant 97 seemed to be genuine. She mustered her strength and crushed the beetle-like machine embedded in his head before standing up and walking toward the other female contestants. She whispered something to them softly.

There was a sudden buzz of commotion within the audience. Lei Ming was moved by this and commented, "Who would've known that Contestant 97 had such magnaminty..."

As the female contestants walked back to their capsules, the combatant was taken away by the staff. Gong Daoyi suddenly pat Lei Ming's shoulder, "Enough nonsense, give me the Geiger counter."

Lei Ming paused for a moment before reacting. He quickly searched his bag and handed the device to Gong Daoyi furtively. Gong Daoyi crooked his head as he stared at the device. When he spoke again, he sounded extremely happy, "There is something we have to do now."

"What?"

"Take this, I need you to puncture everyone's anti-radiation clothes." Gong Daoyi handed him a small knife.

Chapter 127: Tonight's Confrontation

The atmosphere in the arena became very strange after the end of the afternoon match on the seventh day.

Lin Sanjiu wiped her blood-covered face with her hand and her eyes swept over the panicked faces in the audience. It seemed like something had happened outside. Everyone was looking at the screen on their wristbands; anxious people left their seats and quickly headed for the exit; nobody dared to walk near the battle arena. The people looked at the female contestants and started whispering to each other, filling the arena with a vague buzzing noise. There was an occasional cough or a frightened cry while it slowly became clear that something bad had happened.

Groups of soldiers rushed into the arena, were all clad in anti-radiation hazmat suits. The soldiers shouted continuously at the crowd to remain orderly and not to push and step on others. The advertisement on the screen had already been on for quite some time, but the host did not reappear to explain anything. The phrase "Fauxe Camcorder. Keeping your best memories" repeated over and over again.

The situation was so serious that no one noticed that the female contestants did not go back into their capsules.

Li Tao walked over to Lin Sanjiu, who reeked of blood. "What's going on?" Li Tao asked, perplexed. Lin Sanjiu smiled with a load off her mind. Even though her [Nostradamus's Card] had a small area of effect about the size of a person's head, unlike heat which dissipates beyond the area of effect, radioactive particles would quickly disperse into the surrounding. Before this, Lin Sanjiu had already released 26 sieverts of radiation—considering that they might decontaminate the combatant after they bring him back, she was even a little worried that the radiation level wouldn't be high enough.

But by the looks of things, the two soldiers who were tasked with bringing out the corpse of the scrawny security guard must have died. On that night, Lin Sanjiu stealthily released 10 sieverts onto the ankle of the corpse before tossing it. As expected, two soldiers brought the corpse out, one carried his head and the other his legs. Though he died from his severed throat, his ankle swelled with a greenish-purple coloration due to the radiation and Lin Sanjiu was slightly worried. Thankfully, it went unnoticed.

With the protective glass blocking out most of the radiation, and the residents consuming their anti-radiation gummies for resistance against the remaining radiation, the people in Garden of Eden generally had normal bodies, which stood no chance against a direct radiation exposure. Once the radiation level was above 3 sieverts, the number of people who would get radiation sickness or die as a result would rise exponentially.

Even though Lin Sanjiu did not think too much about it when she executed her plan, she was pleasantly surprised when she realized that the glass dome which once protected the people from radiation also made it difficult for the radiation to disperse into the atmosphere, and might even become a gas chamber which would trap them all.

"It's radiation sickness." Ever since the Lunar New Year Tournament began, this was the first time Lin Sanjiu's voice sounded this lighthearted. She turned and looked at the other ten women then whispered to Li Tao, smiling, "You should be tired of this place, right?"

Li Tao blinked as an unfathomable sheen flashed in her black raven eyes.

"We can try to get out tonight."

Li Tao was stunned. Just when she wanted to say something, the advertisement on the large screen disappeared with a snap, leaving only a black screen. Next, Aliba's exasperated voice rang out, "Due

to an emergency crisis, the Lunar New Year Tournament will be suspended now! All audience, please leave the premises in an orderly fashion. Guards, get those mutates back into their capsules!"

Lin Sanjiu laughed before she said to Li Tao, "Don't sleep tonight."

Li Tao still had a shocked expression on her face, she did not know if she should take Lin Sanjiu's words seriously. She quickly nodded and followed after Lin Sanjiu. Lin Sanjiu clapped her hands to gain the attention of the other women and raised her voice and said, "Please rest well this afternoon. I still need everyone's help!"

Even though her voice was loud and clear, and the guards could hear her, she phrased her words rather vaguely. One of the soldiers, who was probably new, let out a sigh of relief after seeing the female contestants return to their capsules following Lin Sanjiu's lead, "Damn it, that Contestant 97 is really a..."

"She won't be alive for much longer," an older soldier snorted after ensuring that all the doors of the capsules were properly shut. He waved his hands and the capsules returned to the containment area. "Don't you know the commanding officers are all desperate now? They don't have time for these mutates... It won't be long before they simply order for them to be killed to save us of all this trouble."

The old soldier was right as Aliba was thinking about that right now. The reason being that the commanding officers in the Military and Police Department were now being severely criticized, him especially, as he headed the Tournament Committee. When the public discovered that the first person who died from radiation was a guard, the government officials from other departments used all their means to stir public opinion against the Military and Police Department. They claimed that the department was wasting resources and neglecting their duties, and was so bad at their jobs that there was now a radiation leak plaguing the Garden of Eden.

This was on top of the fact that the female posthumans had won the last few matches without much injuries. As a result of this, many people had been heard saying, "The military and police are useless".

The only silver lining was that information about the theft was still hidden from the public. After two phone calls with his superiors, Aliba quickly gave out orders to the various media controlled by their department. They were to condemn Garden of Eden Laboratories for poor management which led to the radiation leakage and for siphoning public expenditure leading to poor anti-radiation facilities and installation. Most importantly, to show the power that the Military and Police Department had, the female contestants would all be beheaded tomorrow morning and there would be a live broadcast of this.

"The management rights of Lunar New Year Tournament must not end up with those guys from the Technology gang," Aliba scowled as he spat gravely, "I don't care how we do it, they must take the blame for the radiation sickness!"

The vice chief who was hidden in his full anti-radiation hazmat suit nodded firmly. Before he left, Aliba suddenly stopped him. "Remember. You have to be extra careful tonight. Send more men to guard the arena. If those female mutates cause any trouble, you can forget about coming to work. I need you to keep a close eye on them, especially Contestant 97!

Aliba had always been an extremely cautious person. Following his command, groups of fully armed soldiers were sent to guard the arena after that evening.

Chapter 128: I Want the Garden of Eden to Have the Same End

The arena, which was usually overlit during the matches, was now dark. The pale yellow light streaming from the few weak spotlights barely pierced through the darkness, illuminating a small area. There were about a few dozen guards guarding the place. Their sergeant sat in a chair in a carefree manner, with his hands crossed. He had already fallen asleep. Other than a small patrolling team, the other guards crouched down to rest, and some even started smoking and chatting quietly.

It had already been a couple of hours, but the female Posthumans remained in their capsules without showing any odd behavior. The soldiers who had maintained their high vigilance throughout the night were starting to feel a little tired. "It's okay to rest, but I don't want any of you to let down your guard. Keep your eyes on those capsules," the sergeant who had been sitting motionless suddenly spoke. It immediately got the guards attention and they all replied with a "Yes, sir!"

For a split second, Lin Sanjiu thought that they had spotted her. She held her breath and waited for some time. After confirming that the guards weren't planning anything, she half-crouched as she walked stealthily between the space of two capsules, signaling for the women in the capsules to keep quiet. She had five minutes before the guards started patrolling again. Lin Sanjiu thought for a moment before she pressed both hands on the floor and activated her [Mosaic Censorship]. Boom! Concrete flew everywhere and a shallow hole appeared.

"What's that sound? Team three, investigate!" the sergeant stood up instantly, yelling at his men with his rough voice.

"Sir, the sound came from the capsule containment area but we can't see it clearly!"

Lin Sanjiu felt her throat tightened. The patrolling guards did not enter the containment area when they were patrolling. They basically just walked outside the electric net and swept their flashlights through the area. However, it was vital for her to lure them inside...

Lin Sanjiu had no choice but to use her stupid method again. She waited for some time. Once the flashlight from the patrolling team disappeared above her head, she created another small hole on the floor.

This time, the people outside could no longer neglect it.

"Inform the control room to switch off the High Energy Deflector Barrier. Team three, Team four, go in there are find out the source of that noise. Remember to release the safety locks on your weapons."

[So it's called High Energy Deflector Barrier...] Lin Sanjiu watched as the electric net grew faint and vanished instantly. A total of twenty soldiers from the two teams carried their heavy weapons and stepped into the capsule containment area cautiously. As the light from their headlamps flashed across the capsules, they found nothing wrong. All the women were resting quietly in their capsules. They walked around the containment area twice and finally shouted that there was no problem. After that, the twenty guards walked out of the containment area and the High Energy Deflector Barrier was once again erected.

The two teams returned to their guarding positions and continued watching the capsule containment area.

"That's weird. What made that noise..." the sergeant mumbled to himself. After contemplating, he returned to his chair and activated the screen on his wristband and decided to report the incident to his superior. However, before he could send out his message, he suddenly felt someone touching his shoulder. Following which, he heard a soft cold female voice from behind,

"Have you seen me in the tournament?"

The sergeant, Nanders, froze, and goosebumps instantly appeared on his skin.

"Don't move. Let me introduce myself. I am Contestant 97, Lin Sanjiu." When he felt her breath on his neck, it was as if Death was leaning on his shoulders, "Right now, both my hands are on you."

Nanders could not remember the number of duoluozhongs that had exploded into pieces in a blood mist once Contestant 97 touched them. He opened his mouth dryly but didn't say a word.

"Hey! What are you doing?"

Even though the place was quite dim, other guards noticed the odd behavior of the particular guard who was standing way too close to the sergeant and one of them shouted, "Go back to your post!"

When Nanders felt the hands exerted more force on his shoulders, he hurriedly replied with cold sweat pouring, "I... I told him to give me a massage. Mind your own business!"

The person who spoke quickly kept quiet, while other laughed, "Sergeant, if you like this. Why don't you buy some male mutates back..."

Nanders did not process any of those teasing words or laughter, he could only hear the voice by his ear whispering, "How obedient..."

"I... I will do whatever you want..." It was difficult for him to control his volume when his voice was quivering so much. He had to stop a couple of times as he continued, "Don't kill me. I never killed any mutates..."

"Alright, I need you to switch off that High Energy Deflector Barrier."

Nanders felt as though there was a large black hole behind him. If

he was not careful, he would be sucked in and he wouldn't even have an intact corpse... He gave a dry cough and contacted the people in the control room. Even the other party was rather annoyed, he managed to convince the person that they had to recheck the containment area just to be on the safe side.

After a minute, the electric net surrounding the capsule containment area vanished.

Noticing this abnormality, many of the guards stood up and someone even asked, "Sir, why did you switch off the barrier? Do we have to check one more time?"

Nanders paused and but did not receive additional orders from the person behind him. He gritted his teeth and laughed wryly, "It is almost dawn. I just received orders from the head, you all can go back now..."

The guards kept still for two seconds. Suddenly, another leader waved his hands and all of the guards surrounded both Nanders and Lin Sanjiu while they deactivated the safety locks on their weapons.

"The sergeant has been taken hostage!" one of the men yelled.

Nanders exploded in his chair and became a mixture of torn clothes and splattered flesh the next second. Multiple laser beams were immediately fired at the chair and the small area where both persons were.

[Such firepower should have killed the target, right?] while that was what everyone thought, the yellow light above them went dim for a second. This was when they realized that someone had flipped over their heads. However, before they could take aim again, cries filled the air as a snake-like shadow swept across the men's necks. Blood erupted from their necks as several heads, still in their hazmat helmets, flew to the far end of the arena and fell noisily on the floor.

The guards who were still alive quickly aimed their guns at the fleeting shadow above their heads but they were all too nervous after watching their colleagues being killed. Besides, Lin Sanjiu's speed far exceeded any normal person's. When she finally landed on her feet, none of the men were left standing.

Her arm had been grazed by one of the laser beams, so she applied pressure to her wound and sneered. [That sergeant was smarter than he looked. But if he didn't try to make some sort of signal, he and those guards wouldn't need to die so quickly...]

"Ah, what a massacre."

Lin Sanjiu heard a brisk male voice coming from a dark spot in the arena. Lin Sanjiu tensed her body and pulled out her mouthpart weapon once more.

"Don't worry. I am not your enemy. I am also a Posthuman."

The gentle voice gradually grew closer and a person in a hooded cloak emerged from the darkness. The person stopped when he was still some distance away from Lin Sanjiu. He took off his hood, revealing his fair face.

Even though she knew that it was a man, the person had such exquisite and feminine features that the first impression that Lin Sanjiu had was that he was very beautiful, regardless of his gender.

"Hi, let me introduce myself. I am Gong Daoyi. I am a smuggler and your number one fan." The man chuckled, "Don't look at me so warily... You might not be aware, but we have both helped each other albeit unintentionally."

That sentence had no effect, Lin Sanjiu continued staring icily at him.

"You have thirty seconds to prove that you're a Posthuman."

"Oh my! How prudent." Gong Daoyi seemed delighted. He waved his left hand and a large black shadow suddenly appeared from behind him. It appeared from nowhere and though Lin Sanjiu

could not see it clearly, it seemed to be some large beast.

"Is that enough? I'm here to help you. I know those capsules are hard to open." Gong Daoyi waved his hands again and the large apparition quickly disappeared like smoke. "Thanks to you, there is a large commotion about radiation sickness now. I guessed that you would attempt to escape tonight, otherwise, it would be a wasted opportunity.

"You know it was me?" Lin Sanjiu frowned slightly but did not pursue the question. The man was right. Even though she could try using her [Mosaic Censorship], she did not have the confidence to open the capsules without hurting the women inside. She nodded at Gong Daoyi and gestured for him to follow her. She turned and walked toward the capsule containment area, but she placed her full attention behind her, tightening every inch of her muscles so she could react immediately if anything happened.

Gong Daoyi narrowed his eyes and grinned and followed her into the capsule containment area casually. The female contestants stood up one after the other, pushing the walls of their capsules, looking at them with brightened eyes. After being trapped for so long, they couldn't wait to regain their freedom. While the women looked at them with teary eyes, Lin Sanjiu led Gong Daoyi to one of the capsules, "You can try to open this capsule."

Xu Wei bit her lips as she stared at the two people outside her capsule without blinking her eyes even once. Gong Daoyi laughed a little and took out a little bird from nowhere. The little bird had very bright feathers and its eyes moved around in a lively manner. Once it was in Gong Daoyi's hand, it began to chirp, "I want to sing."

"If you eat this door, you won't need to sing, right?" Gong Daoyi stroked the little bird gently. The little bird replied with a "yes". Lin Sanjiu watched with amazement as the bird opened its small yellow beak, then in a scientifically impossible manner, it swallowed half the door in one mouth.

The mass of what it ate was a few dozen times its own body, so where that mass went was totally unfathomable.

"Is this a Special Item?" Lin Sanjiu stammered while she held Xu Wei who rushed out of the capsule and hugged her. She patted the woman's back a few times to comfort her.

"You're right." Gong Daoyi nodded and when the bird announced that it wanted to sing again, he brought it to the next capsule, "Anyway, it needs to eat so that it would shut up and not sing."

The little bird ate quickly, and within a few minutes, they had freed over twenty women. But when the little bird ate the next door, a black shadow rushed out from the capsule aiming a direct attack at Gong Daoyi—

The latter leaped out of the attack range as if he had already expected it. The black shadow stopped. It was a green snake-like cucumber.

"Xueqin, what are you doing?" Lin Sanjiu was shocked and carried Xueqin out from her capsule.

One of the female contestants in the afternoon match knew how to set broken bones, so she managed to help Xueqin set her bones back. However, the woman still could not move and had to lean against Lin Sanjiu's arm as she panted, "It's him! He betrayed me! He called the Military and Police Department!"

The atmosphere suddenly became tense. Gong Daoyi acted surprised and clasped his hands. "Oh, it's you... I didn't expect that you would be caught. Well, you must have gotten the wrong guy."

If one was to rate his acting, the half-hearted attitude he showed deserved a negative score. Xueqin wanted to scold him but Lin Sanjiu pressed her arm lightly as if to signal something to her, so she kept quiet.

"Let's free everyone first. We can talk about that later." Lin Sanjiu handed Xueqin to Bai Xiaoke's escort before giving Gong

Daoyi a bland look. The man continued smiling as if he was totally unaware that his trustworthiness had fallen to rock bottom.

All the 52 women, including the two survivors from the previous match, were finally freed from their capsules. With the exception of the woman who went insane and was a little difficult to handle, the other women surrounded Lin Sanjiu and waited for her to say something.

"What should we do next? Should we escape this city?" One of the women asked.

These women probably never imagined that they would actually end up in a situation where they would rather face an apocalyptic landscape...

Lin Sanjiu looked at all of them. Before she spoke, she walked to the pile of corpses and removed the hazmat suit from a body. She held it in her hands and said calmly as she felt the eyes on her back, "If you want to get out of this snowglobe city, I won't stop you. But, please also help the mentally unsound woman escape. As for me, I won't run away."

"Where... do you want to go?" Li Tao couldn't help asking. Lin Sanjiu straightened her back and smiled at them. "You know something. No matter where I go, I will leave that place in shambles before I leave. First, it was a supermarket, then another survivors' settlement... I don't see why Garden of Eden should be an exception"

After pausing for a moment, Lin Sanjiu finally announced softly, "I want to stay and destroy their glass dome."

Chapter 129: The Hidden Oddities in the Garden of Eden

Strictly speaking, this was Lin Sanjiu's first time on the street in the Garden of Eden. Just as what she had observed from outside the glass globe, the design of the city was vastly different from anything she had seen on Earth (she could only put it this way). As it was not yet dawn, the sky outside the glass globe was a hue of dark blue and dotted with bright twinkling stars. The yellow street lamps floating mid-air descended like birds as they sensed people's footsteps. They cast a warm yellow light on the street, illuminating their path. An interplay of cool and warm colors against the background to the tranquil night sky was just like a piece of art.

Xueqin, who was in the male escort's arms, suddenly made a cold remark, "Don't be fooled by these things. There is a surveillance camera in each of the street lamps." Dong Haohao, who just attempted to touch the lamps, quickly pulled back her hand after hearing that.

Lin Sanjiu turned to look at the few dozen people behind her and spoke quietly to Li Tao, "Even though everyone is wearing those military grade hazmat suits and thus our identities wouldn't be exposed so quickly, we still have to be careful. Could you get them to talk and move less, we just have to hold our guns and move forward."

Li Tao nodded before turning and passing the message to the group.

Though it did not sound like a large number, when 43 people walked together, they covered almost half a street. Lin Sanjiu did not actually expect so many people to follow her. Of those who left, a few were concerned about their safety, but the rest were about to be sent to another world so they did not want to take any unnecessary risks...

After Gong Daoyi gave them the directions to escape the city, he did not leave. He followed behind the troop of female Posthumans. Although Lin Sanjiu wasn't keen on him staying with them, she couldn't bring herself to immediately chase him away. In the end, she kept Xueqin by her side so both people wouldn't start a fight on the streets.

"Can you see that black tower in the distance? The residents here are absolutely forbidden to go there. Supposedly, that is a central component of the glass globe which provides the power required for the protective shield."

"Power?" Lin Sanjiu was a little confused. She looked up at the glass globe above them. No matter how she looked, it seemed like a physical infrastructure to her, and she couldn't see how it would need an energy source. "How many people usually guard that place?"

Unexpectedly, Xueqin harrumphed and said, "There are no guards. No one knows why, but people who get close to the black tower always disappear without a trace. That includes the soldiers guarding the place. Basically, it is not necessary to guard it, as it guards itself."

After she finished her sentence in a matter-of-fact manner, she suddenly turned away her head, as if embarrassed, so Lin Sanjiu only saw the back of the woman's head. She continued, "So if you wish to court death, you can go and try."

"Oh." Lin Sanjiu replied unconsciously as she was still puzzled by the conundrum about the power source.

A high-pitched siren rang out from afar, piercing through the silent night. A couple of ambulances swooped past their heads leaving a draft of wind. It had only been 30 minutes since they had escaped the arena and this was the fifth fleet of ambulances that they had seen. Occasionally, they even heard some cries from the residential apartments. Apparently, the outbreak of radiation

sickness was far worse than what Lin Sanjiu anticipated. Lin Sanjiu furrowed her brows and had a faint inkling that there was something wrong. However, she found the black tower so intriguing that she didn't spare time for that fleeting thought.

They took a bend around the corner and found a white conch-shaped building, it stole all of Lin Sanjiu's attention. The form of the building flowed well, giving it a clean and cute appearance. It was just like what she saw from outside the city. Lin Sanjiu stood in front of the building and took a deep breath. She pulled out her mouthpart weapon with lightning speed. With a few leaps, she destroyed five street lamps consecutively. After that, she pressed the illuminated doorbell and gestured to the escort. The escort placed Xueqin down and walked to the door with another woman who was wearing a hazmat helmet.

A projection appeared from the illuminated doorbell, it was an image of a middle-aged butler with an angry and sleepy face, "Who is it? This early in the morning?"

He saw the escort's military hazmat suit and gradually looked up, "Why are you here, soldiers?"

As Bai Xiaoke opened her mouth from behind, her escort said plainly, "The female mutates will be put to death in two hours. Our chief ordered us to sent the female mutate that Mr. Guang liked here first."

After he said that, he took off the woman's helmet, revealing a pitiful looking face—it was Hui Chuyan.

When the butler saw the most popular female contestant of the tournament in front of him, his eyes lit up and he let down his guard, "When did the master... Oh, alright. I will open the door for you. Wait a moment..."

When the two metal doors retracted upwards rapidly, the escort covered the illuminated doorbell and gestured for Lin Sanjiu and the others behind him. All of them rushed into the building.

They found themselves in a large, half-lit living room. The butler who was midway down the stairs saw the group of more than forty aggressive people rushing in brashly. He was so scared that he turned to run, but a black shadow pierced through his chest. His body immediately rolled down the stairs.

Lin Sanjiu waved her mouthpart weapon, aiming it at a person that was nearby. Just then, someone switched on the light in the living room. Light flooded the room and Lin Sanjiu immediately stopped. That was not a person. It was a taxidermied female, and the look of fear had been immortalized on her young face.

In a small hall by the fireplace, probably a place where guests were served tea, there were more than ten other 'specimens' showing different kinds of expressions. The only commonality between them was the humiliating state of their corpses.

"Let's go up there and catch that rubbish called Guang Zhu!" Lin Sanjiu roared furiously, while the other women answered with the same level of fury. Lin Sanjiu led the group upstairs. The bodyguards they met along the way, though armed with small, low-caliber weapons, stood no chance against them. When Lin Sanjiu reached the top floor and kicked open a lavishly decorated bedroom door, she saw Guang Zhu. That fat man was busy packing his suitcase.

"Who sent you here? I will give you ten times—"

A loud female shriek made him shut his mouth. While the fat man was stunned, a person lunged at him and violently slapped his face over and over again. "You wanted to add me to your sick collection? And you killed my sister! Where is my sister? Where is she?" Hui Chuyan said with a heart-wrenching voice.

Hui Chuyan was not wearing her helmet. She glared at the fat man with her bloodshot eyes, while his face instantly turned white. But it didn't remain white for long. Hui Chuyan's wrath was accompanied by her posthuman strength. After more than ten

slaps, the man's messed up face became just a pile of mashed flesh which hung on to his broken skull. The man was already dead, but Hui Chuyan continued pounding at the dead man's body with her full strength as if she was unaware. Lin Sanjiu sighed and went over to stop her. Hui Chuyan stood in a daze for a moment before stopping, then she fell into Lin Sanjiu's arms and started sobbing.

"My sister... arrived here before me... We have telepathic abilities. So, so I can feel whatever she is feeling. I've experienced all her emotions..." she stammered while she cried, causing the others to start sobbing as well.

[That was why she was so afraid then... If anyone found out that they would have to experience the same humiliation and torture after experiencing it once, they would definitely fall apart...]

"Let's all calm down," Lin Sanjiu said with a serious tone, her clear rational voice drew the attention of the group. "Some of the girls are already guarding the entrance. All of us should look around the house and stop anyone here from calling the police. If you see any servants, it is up to you if you want to tie them up or kill them."

The other women agreed and the group quickly spread out to search the rooms.

The only thing that mattered to the Tournament Committee was that the female contestants were kept alive until they entered the battle arena. Thus, they basically didn't care to do anything more. Lin Sanjiu and the other women were either covered with wounds or were exhausted. Furthermore, the last time they had anything to eat was days ago.

Lin Sanjiu reckoned that they couldn't walk far even with the military hazmat suits as camouflage as they were near their physical limits, considering their body conditions. They desperately needed a place to rest and recover. After considering

for some time, she finally thought of the sponsors.

According to Lin Sanjiu's words, those sponsors should indeed play their roles properly and assist them.

Guang Zhu certainly deserved to die. He was a zealous fan of the tournament. Not only did he collect many taxidermied contestants, he also kept a lot of human parts and high definition videos of the tournament. The women's rage only abated after they had burnt up his whole collection.

With Xu Wei taking the lead, some of them went to the kitchen to cook. Meanwhile, the other who had participated in a few matches had already fallen asleep by the fireplace. Ever since the first match, Lin Sanjiu could not relax. She sat alone on a sofa at the corner of the hall, unable to close her eyes. She quietly observed the other busy women walking in and out of the living room.

Someone walked over and sat down beside her. After quite a while, Gong Daoyi asked quietly, "I guess you can't enter the black tower now. So, how do you plan to destroy the glass globe?"

Lin Sanjiu continued staring ahead, she did not even turn to look at him but instead asked him, "Why did you betray Xueqin?"

"I had no choice. I don't even know her... I wouldn't consider that as a betrayal."

Lin Sanjiu found herself at a loss for words when she received such an honest answer. At the same time, Xueqin, who was quite far from them, was being piggybacked by the escort. She was very busy as she had to tell the other women how to use the various utensils in the kitchen. Once again, they heard a random faint cry from a distance, and the sound of an ambulance siren...

Lin Sanjiu quivered ever so slightly that it was almost impossible to see, yet Gong Daoyi sensed it.

"Even though this community is wicked and twisted, they are all people. If you destroy the glass globe, you are basically going take away countless of lives. You must be feeling a great deal of pressure, right?" There was a sort of indescribable tempo in the way Gong Daoyi spoke, despite his gentle voice. Lin Sanjiu's mind was suddenly overwhelmed by the stress and exhaustion she had accumulated over these few days.

"I heard that nearly a thousand people had died from the radiation, and of course there are women, elderly people, and children... I give you credit for releasing radiation here." Gong Daoyi continued mildly, "As they spend all their lives under the protection of the glass, they don't develop any form of anti-radiation abilities. When they died, their looks were really horrible..."

After he continued talking for quite some time, he noticed tears rolling down Lin Sanjiu's closed eyes. She curled her body and shrunk herself into the corner of the sofa and stopped moving. Gong Daoyi stood up silently and sighed.

"So you are only at this level... Luckily, I'm decisive," he muttered to himself and was about to leave. He had just taken his first step when he heard an icy voice.

"Stop."

Gong Daoyi was quite surprised. He turned and saw Lin Sanjiu's reddish eyes which showed a cold steely determination even after she had just cried.

"You tried to use hypnosis on me. Well, thank you, because you reminded me of something important." Though she remained on the sofa, there was now a weapon in her hand.

Chapter 130: The Dreaded Hero Complex

The silent confrontation at the corner of the hall drew no attention. When Gong Daoyi saw the weapon in Lin Sanjiu's hand, his eyes brightened and he even showed a faint smile. He sat down again with an amiable expression as if he was having tea with an old friend, "Okay, why don't you tell me what you remembered?"

Lin Sanjiu simply couldn't understand the man's behavior.

"Oh, You misunderstood my intentions. I did try to hypnotize you. But I mean you no harm." Gong Daoyi clapped his hands as if he just remembered something, "I was a consultant in the past. I know you are under a great deal of pressure... If you didn't snap out the hypnosis just now, you would feel your stress slowly ebbing away. And when you woke up, you would feel fantastic."

Lin Sanjiu squinted as if she was trying to figure this man out and didn't say a word. After some time, her mouthpart weapon disappeared from her hand. "If you try that again, don't say I didn't warn you," she stated coldly.

Gong Daoyi looked at her with his star-spangled eyes and blinked before he nodded.

Lin Sanjiu walked away without saying another word.

Even though her School of Higher Consciousness was still temporarily sealed, it boosted her natural cognitive abilities and willpower. It helped her to snap out of that hypnosis session. With regards to Gong Daoyi, she felt that it was safer if she could keep an eye on him.

While the other women cooked, they bantered and laughed. Xueqin's frustrated voice could easily be heard, "Didn't I say that is a quick cook button? Why did you bake that for such a long time... I think you better peel off that skin! Hey, that is not an egg. Ahhh!"

As the women burst out into laughter, the escort walked out of

the kitchen. Xueqin and himself were covered with frosting, just like two snowmen. Her glum expression was still clearly visible despite the white powder on her face. This was the first time Lin Sanjiu heard the others laughing—she couldn't help let out a chuckle. When Xueqin glared at her, she quickly suppressed her laughter and asked, "Is dinner ready?"

"Even though they made a big mess, the dishes should be ready in 30 minutes, whatever is left, that is," Xueqin replied earnestly with her sugar powdered face. "Are you hungry?"

Lin Sanjiu nodded but that was not the reason why she asked her about dinner. Lin Sanjiu found Li Tao and passed her a card.

"I think he will let down his guard during dinner. I want you to stick this card on his hazmat suit. It is best if you could paste it somewhere which is hard to spot."

Li Tao took the card from her and looked at it. A line of words appeared on the card: "4:08 AM, It feels great to be held in the hand of a beautiful and cute lady."

Lin Sanjiu snatched the card from Li Tao and squished it tightly in her hand. Just when Li Tao thought she misheard a screaming sound, the card was returned to her.

When she looked at the card again, it only showed these plain words "This card has been preset to be activated after 30 minutes, at 4:38 AM."

The women, who were sleeping, quickly woke up without anyone calling when the fragrant smell of the first dish wafted into their noses, as all it took was their rumbling stomachs. Including Gong Daoyi, there were a total of 45 mouths to feed. The amount of food needed was actually quite large. Thankfully, Guang Zhu's house was well-stocked with food, so everyone could have a full meal.

Considering that they wouldn't be staying there for long, everyone brought all the food that they could find to the table.

There was that free-range 'chicken', something yellow like egg tarts, a large loaf of bread, a pizza with some meat sauce, etc. Everyone was in a great mood and someone even found wine and began happily drinking directly from the bottle.

Since the table was not large enough, the women placed the dishes together. Some of the people sat on the sofas and some on the floor—Lin Sanjiu intentionally sat at the end of the long table. She watched from afar as Li Tao sat beside Gong Daoyi, she smiled faintly and took a bite of her shepherd's pie.

Xueqin looked at Lin Sanjiu nervously and quickly turned her head, while she uttered, "I made that. You might not enjoy it."

"My escort made that, alright?" Bai Xiaoke took a large swig of wine, "We had been serving you the whole night. Look, my escort already shrank by 10 cm..." Her escort nodded his head as if in agreement while he fed Xueqin a mouthful of vegetables.

"What else do you two plan to do?" Xueqin chewed as she asked blandly.

Wine sprayed out from Bai Xiaoke's mouth and landed directly on Lin Sanjiu's face. Lin Sanjiu knocked both their heads and they quickly stopped their shenanigans.

After barely escaping with their lives, and now on the way to destroy this world, there was really nothing better than good wine and food. All of them made merry, laughing and singing, and some of them even took off their tops and started dancing on the table.

"I couldn't even imagine such a scenario in the past." Xueqin blushed as she suddenly commented. Lin Sanjiu turned to her and saw her watching the dancing girls in a daze. "They look so happy... I know how to dance, but it is those type that men like to watch."

"We only study for three years with the boys, after that the Government will assign us to various posts. The men will learn all

sorts of skills and we will... learn how to cook, how to do housework, how to care for children and how to entertain men." Xueqin gestured to Bai Xiaoke to give her another glass of wine, "All these years, the ratio of males to females had been 10:14 because when the boys become men, they always control the sex ratio."

"When you announced that you will destroy the glass globe, my feet went numb... But if I think carefully about it, I think that is the feeling of excitement. Ever since I was just a little girl, I had always dreamt of going outside..."

After hearing that, Lin Sanjiu couldn't help asking, "If the glass globe is destroyed, your parents—"

"A mother can make her daughter take her place if she wants fewer beatings," Xueqin uttered with indifference and did not elaborate, instead she changed the subject, "When I was a kid, I used to disguise myself as a boy to go to the library. I read some book about the past—before the nuclear war. I really couldn't believe that women back then could do whatever they wanted..."

These words stirred Lin Sanjiu's interest. She put down the silver fork in her hand and looked around before she whispered, "Can I ask you a question?"

"What do you want to know?"

"Regarding the nuclear war... what actually happened? How was Garden of Eden built?" Lin Sanjiu asked.

"The nuclear war wasn't that long ago. It has been about 60 to 70 years. Garden of Eden was built after the war... Some of the technology was lost during the war, therefore, we are still unable to figure out the technology behind the protective glass globe. If you destroy it, they will not be able to build another one."

Her explanation answered some of Lin Sanjiu's doubts. Lin Sanjiu nodded and grabbed her fork when Xueqin sighed, "How are

we going to destroy it? That is the problem."

Lin Sanjiu did not even worry a bit about that. She ate a mouthful of potato and replied with her mouth full, "If we destroy the black tower, wouldn't that also destroy the glass globe?"

"You can't do that! Are you stupid!" If Xueqin could move her limbs, she wouldn't have slammed her fist on the table. "All the people who entered the tower never came back. We don't even know if they are dead or alive!"

"Alright. Alright," Lin Sanjiu said half-heartedly. Anyone with a discerning eye could tell that she was still determined to do that.

Just then, two girls which were having fun like crazy suddenly rushed to Lin Sanjiu's side and showed her their dance moves. The two girls danced around her chair, twirling so much that Xueqin couldn't continue with the conversation. While all of them enjoyed themselves, the sky was slowly turning bright.

The forty over women who were supposed to be beheaded at this time were all lying around the house like children. Some of them were totally asleep. Lin Sanjiu found six women who did not drink and arranged for them to keep watch in shifts. She surveyed the entire interior and exterior of the house carefully before she finally plopped herself on a sofa. Even though Guang Zhu's bed was large and comfortable, no one wanted to sleep in it. They all chose to sleep and squeeze together in the living room.

Li Tao bounced over like a little puppy and sat beside Lin Sanjiu. "Miss Lin, I already stuck the card to his suit. He didn't notice it. What should we do next?"

Lin Sanjiu opened one of her eyes and looked at her before closing it again.

"Tonight, you guys should split into a few groups. We have to stir up trouble. I don't care if you commit arson or demolish buildings. The most important thing is to keep yourselves safe while creating

havoc. You guys should just expend all your pent-up anger. But those people from the Military and Police Department are no pushovers, so each group should be kept to four to five people."

"If anything goes awry, just retreat. Don't get caught. Oh, and we need to choose a few leaders."

Li Tao watched Lin Sanjiu with her deep black eyes and agreed unflinchingly.

"When we get out there, we have to ditch Gong Daoyi. We mustn't let him follow us... In the worst case scenario, I will stall him for some time."

When she heard this, Li Tao couldn't resist asking, "What about you? Aren't you coming with us?"

Lin Sanjiu opened her eyes and stared at her. "I already brought you people out from the tournament, can't you let me rest? I will stay here and wait for all of you. We will take advantage of the chaos and head out to destroy the glass globe after that."

Not many of them knew about the matter regarding the black tower. Li Tao thought for a moment and accepted what Lin Sanjiu said with an affirmative mumble before leaving. To Lin Sanjiu, the woman didn't seem to sense anything out of the ordinary.

Lin Sanjiu laid on the sofa and as she heard the breathing sounds gradually settling down, she let out a sigh. "Damn it. Why didn't I ever realize in the past that I have this stupid hero complex?"

Chapter 131: Malice

As if a tiger had escaped its shackles and crept into their backyards, all the residents in the Garden of Eden spent a day in fear and turmoil when the officials could no longer suppress the news of the disappearance of the female Posthumans. If someone were to stand by the window, they would hear the sharp barks from the marching troops on the streets as well as the wailing sirens from many ambulances. Every now and then, the sound of broken glass could be heard and cacophony of noise had already lasted for the entire day.

Lei Ming, who had obediently stayed indoors as told, had no idea what had happened outside. He circled the entire house anxiously until night came. When Gong Daoyi finally returned, Lei Ming visibly let out a sigh of relief before welcoming him quickly.

Gong Daoyi combed his hair back with his fingers. There was barely any expression on his beautiful, immaculate face, "Yes, they already escaped."

"That's great! That explains the pandemonium outside... Um, you look unhappy?" Lei Ming asked cautiously.

Gong Daoyi kneaded his own face and answered, "No, but we have to leave Garden of Eden tonight."

As a habitual people-pleaser, Lei Ming was dazed only for a short second before he agreed quickly. After some consideration, he decided not to ask if they were really going to just leave those female Posthumans to their own devices.

Gong Daoyi sat in a chair and looked upwards. He suddenly spoke with a slightly quivering voice and an indescribably ambiguous tone, "Oh... I have to thank her for chasing me away. I was so scared and excited the entire day..."

Meanwhile, Lin Sanjiu was quite puzzled that she managed to

send Gong Daoyi away with just a few words, she actually thought that it would be harder. She did not want to waste time thinking about it because in any case, they were not coming back to Guang Zhu's residence.

"To summarize, these two teams will focus on locations where the anti-radiation resources are stored. Xueqin will brief you on the exact location. It would be better if you could catch and question some people, so we wouldn't miss any crucial..."

The 43 people were grouped into ten smaller teams. Lin Sanjiu tried her best to put people with different types of abilities together so that they could complement each other's weaknesses. Their targets were various strategic locations in the city. They had also worked out how they could communicate and get help between teams.

When their plans have been finalized, it was already late at night.

"The operation will last for two hours. After two hours, all teams should gather at the meeting point. Please remember, safety first."

Lin Sanjiu stood at the door as she watched the various teams leave. When each of them walked past her, they nodded and smiled at her or added a quick remark. Each of them carried a laser gun at their waists. In the worst case scenario, the gun would ensure that they wouldn't be captured alive. Even though there were 43 people now, Lin Sanjiu wondered if there would still be 43 people when they meet up again.

Someone stopped by her side and Lin Sanjiu noticed that it was Xueqin, who was still being piggybacked by the escort. After the escort had been used for one day, he had become much shorter and Xueqin's legs were just dragged around. She didn't seem to mind, but was rather curious when she looked at Lin Sanjiu, "Why aren't you coming with us?"

"I'll be honest with you," Lin Sanjiu looked into her eyes sincerely, "I told you guys not to go to the Garden of Eden

Laboratories, right? Well, I wanted to scout out that place first."

"Isn't it dangerous for you to go alone?"

"I will just observe from outside, it shouldn't be a problem." Lin Sanjiu flashed a faint smile.

Xueqin murmured to herself before she nodded and said, "Take care." Then, she left with Bai Xiaoke. When they were quite far, Lin Sanjiu turned and Li Tao stuffed a card into her hand, "I followed what you said, and took the card after three hours. Have a look..."

"Thank you. Please be careful out there." Lin Sanjiu held her Diary card and hugged Li Tao. [This feels like we are parting forever...] Lin Sanjiu sighed and walked upstairs. She opened every door until she found a bathroom. If she was really going to die tonight, she wanted to smell good when she was dead.

The beige ceramic bathtub was almost the size of a small swimming pool. Even with multiple taps filling the hot tub, it took over ten minutes. As steam filled in the bathroom, Lin Sanjiu took off her clothes and jumped into the bathtub. When her skin first touched the warm water, she immediately made a refreshing "ah". It was just that comfortable! After all, the last time she took a bath was ages ago...

While she enjoyed the ripples, she reached for her pants and got a pen and a piece of paper. She leaned over the edge of the bathtub and decided to leave some words for the others.

"Hi, all. I lied to you. Haha! I am going to the black tower alone. Supposedly, if it is destroyed, the glass globe will also be destroyed. Xueqin, please do not curse when you read this. When you read this letter, it would have been two hours later. Wait for me at the meeting point for a while..."

Lin Sanjiu reconsidered her words and scratched out "a while", and replaced it with "thirty minutes".

"If I haven't returned by then, please leave. Leave Garden of Eden and don't think about destroying the glass globe anymore."

Lin Sanjiu bit her pen and finally added, "Best regards, Lin Sanjiu."

That should sum up everything. Lin Sanjiu folded the paper and kept it back into the pocket of her pants. "Splash." She dived into the water and fooled around for some time. Suddenly, she remembered something and summoned her Diary card. She hasn't even read it properly after Li Tao handed it to her.

The events recorded in those three hours were quite insignificant. Gong Daoyi ate, chatted and slept. The conversations were nothing interesting. They were just random conversations with the various young ladies.

"7:29 AM, retrieved by a super cute girl."

When Lin Sanjiu saw the last sentence, she knew that she didn't get any information. She scrolled through the words once again, as if she wasn't satisfied with the outcome. She couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong, but even after reading through every word that Gong Daoyi said, she couldn't find anything fishy.

Without any other options, Lin Sanjiu kept her Diary card—it kept repeating the line "If only I were in the same bath as that super cute girl." Lin Sanjiu found a bottle of shower gel and sniffed the fragrance as she poured it into the water. She let out a sigh of enjoyment.

After 20 minutes, she reluctantly got out of the bathtub. She found a clean set of clothes from her card deck and wore them. She checked the items she had before she finally left Guang Zhu's house.

The meeting point was suggested by Xueqin and it was at a closed-down factory that would soon be rebuilt. Lin Sanjiu pasted the letter on the door of the factory before sprinting towards the

black tower. Using her maximum speed, she reached the tower in less than ten minutes. Lin Sanjiu noticed that the atmosphere around suddenly got a lot creepier. Right in front of her, the black tower loomed over like a giant ominous beast.

She looked around the place and found nobody nearby, just as described. Land was a scarce resource in Garden of Eden, yet there wasn't even a building near the black tower. There was only a heavy thick mist circling the tower. The tower's mysterious design and cold black metal facade stood out from the usually refreshing, adorable-looking architecture in the Garden of Eden.

"Odd. There is really no one guarding this place?" Lin Sanjiu raised her guard as she stepped closer to the door, while she was on a constant lookout for danger.

She guessed that a ten-meters flat metal structure which looked movable was the door. The entire tower seemed a little stronger than she expected. Lin Sanjiu walked carefully to the metal door and realized that there wasn't even a single gap which indicated an opening.

"How am I supposed to get in?" She was a little frustrated as she stamped her feet, but the door stood still.

Lin Sanjiu activated her [Mosaic Censorship] and tried to blast the door apart. A few pieces of fist-sized metal fell to the ground, exposing the inner structure of the door which was at least ten feet thick. If she had to use this method to enter, it would probably take a month.

"Why is this door so thick?" Lin Sanjiu frowned. "If the door was already that thick, how thick were the walls? The interior of the tower doesn't look that big."

Lin Sanjiu was at her wit's end as she walked around the entrance. Suddenly, her eyes stopped on something. She noticed that one of the metal pieces which made up the wall was of a lighter color and was slightly jutting. Lin Sanjiu tried pulling it.

She was almost exerting all her strength when she touched something and suddenly she heard a doorbell sound, "Ding dong—"

The inviting sound of the doorbell rang out a few times. The night was so quiet that it seemed as if the noise would be heard by the entire Garden of Eden. As the doorbell sound echoed, Lin Sanjiu stopped while she stared in a daze at what she saw.

The door, which she tried so hard to destroy, was slowly opening. It made a deep, rumbling sound as if it had been years since it was last opened.

[What? I just have to press the doorbell to get this opened?]

Lin Sanjiu stared blankly for a few seconds before she drew out her mouthpart weapon and peered inside the tower. It was totally dark inside, she couldn't see anything without a light source.

Lin Sanjiu gritted her teeth and stepped into the tower. Once she entered, the metal door closed again with a rumbling sound as if it detected her presence. Without the last bit of natural light from the outside world, she couldn't even see her fingers. Lin Sanjiu took two steps into the darkness and a bright light suddenly assaulted her eyes. She squinted and when she opened her eyes again, she was flabbergasted.

"Are you kidding me?!"

Chapter 132: The Scenery Here Isn't Right.

"How could my deduction be so off?" Lin Sanjiu was bewildered when she saw her surroundings. She froze on the spot for a long time. She was sure it only took her about ten minutes to walk around the circumference of the black tower. If the door was already that thick, it was impossible for the interior space to be this big...

However, Lin Sanjiu was dumbfounded by the scenery before her.

A gentle breeze swept past her ears like a dancing sprite, toying with her hair. She could sense that she was standing on soft, arable soil even with her boots on. There was an atmosphere of spring all around her. Lush grass covered the rolling hills before her, as wildflowers dotted the scenery like twinkling stars in the night sky, a green forest path cut across the hills, disappearing into the horizon.

Lin Sanjiu barely took two steps forward before she jumped and rolled around in the flower fields, unable to resist her urge. She felt as if she was a newborn lamb and as if she had always belonged here in this land and this day in springtime. She could feel the fresh grass pricking her skin as she laid by a cluster of white daisies. She opened her eyes and stared at the sky above her. Suddenly, her body turned icy cold.

She saw an azure sky with fluffy white clouds. It was a nice sunny day. Lin Sanjiu narrowed her eyes as she looked at the sun hanging far above her. Her mind went into a complete blank because she remembered that it was near the middle of the night when she stepped into the black tower. [Where did the sun come from?]

The strong grassy aroma in the air and the sensation of the cool breeze blowing against her face made it clear that this was not an illusion. Lin Sanjiu quickly sat up and tried her best to remember

every single detail before she opened her eyes.

Before she saw the bright light, she did not feel any breeze or smell anything. The place was simply pitch black. Lin Sanjiu got up and surveyed the beauty around her as she mumbled, "Is this... a pocket dimension?"

She knew she couldn't be wrong. This was the same experience she had in the previous two pocket dimensions—it was as if she had walked into a different dimension. [If this was a pocket dimension, why was it in the tower? Could it be that the pocket dimensions can be created by people?]

She frowned and activated her [A Twinkle in the Sky] and touched a small yellow flower with a finger. Ever since this ability evolved, Lin Sanjiu discovered that she could activate the two different versions: the first version was the original and the second version was the more sinister [Mosaic Censorship]. She couldn't deny that it was a convenient ability. Once she touched the small yellow flower, it immediately shot out from the ground and flew into the sky. It changed into a bright spot in the sky and there was a "ding" sound.

Lin Sanjiu stood up straight and was so stunned that she couldn't even show a single expression on her face. If there was a ceiling above her, she would not be able to use that ability. Logically speaking, if she was still in the black tower, she shouldn't be able to use it.

This meant that the pocket dimension did not exist within the same spatial space as the original dimension but instead is a portal to another dimension, on a different plane. Just like the existence of the infinite number of New Worlds, this was also a mystery.

After she established this point, she felt the hair on her back stand. She turned and ran towards the direction that she came from. However, just as she expected, she did not find any sort of exit even after running for almost ten minutes. She only saw hills,

the forest, and the lake...

"That's how those people went missing!" Lin Sanjiu rubbed her face anxiously. Her earlier contentment was long gone and she wished she could go back to 30 minutes before and slap herself.

It wasn't easy for her to calm herself. After thinking it through, she made a conjecture about the situation. In the past, someone must have discovered this pocket dimension. Thus, a tower was built around the pocket dimension to contain it. This also explains the odd shape of the black tower. After she entered the door, she probably found herself in the passageway between the two dimensions for the few seconds of darkness.

It was no wonder that there were no guards because no one would expect that there would be a pocket dimension here...

"But, if the residents of Garden of Eden built this tower, why are they clueless about it?" Lin Sanjiu furrowed her brows and followed the forested path. She tried to recall Xueqin's words, "She did mention that many years ago, quite a few people also fell into this trap..."

It didn't make sense that the construction of the tower had been erased from history, as Garden of Eden had only been established for 50 to 60 years. Since these records were trapped in the glass globe, it was highly unlikely that it could just go missing.

With this train of thoughts, Lin Sanjiu felt a familiar uncertainty again. Previously, her doubts and questions seemed to be properly addressed by Xueqin. But, now, everything seemed wrong again.

Regardless, her top priority now was to find the exit. Lin Sanjiu strolled for some time and suddenly stopped. She heard a soft tune nearby. Someone was humming a strange song and was quickly approaching her. Lin Sanjiu couldn't see who it was from where she stood as the forest was too dense but she could tell that it was a female.

She sounded joyful and carefree.

Lin Sanjiu felt a little tense and quickly activated her [Mosaic Censorship]. She held her breath and listened to the footsteps which were gradually getting closer. The humming voice was also getting clearer. The youthful sounding voice seemed to suggest that the owner was quite young. Some distance away, there was a narrow little path which could easily be overlooked. It led towards where Lin Sanjiu was and now she could see a person.

For one full minute, she really doubted what she saw.

[This isn't right?]

But, she couldn't think of another explanation at this moment. Only one person popped up in her mind. Lin Sanjiu stepped out from behind a tree. As she walked out, she couldn't help feeling a little dazed—she felt that she must have become mad after entering this pocket dimension.

The little girl on the path was definitely shocked when she saw a person suddenly walking out from behind a tree. Startled, she nearly dropped her basket. The bottle of wine in her basket fell out but Lin Sanjiu rushed forward and grabbed it before it hit the ground.

Lin Sanjiu quickly handed the bottle of wine to the little girl. The little girl held the bottle tightly and placed it carefully in her basket with some lingering fear on her face. "Thank you. Are you also taking the shortcut through the forest?" the little girl asked, there was a smile on her fair, freckled face.

"Um. Yes." Lin Sanjiu replied with a stutter. She saw that the girl had placed the bottle of wine into a transparent box which also contained a cake. The girl's red velvet cape was extremely eye-catching.

"Your cape is beautiful, it really suits you..." Lin Sanjiu said trying to test the girl's reaction.

The little girl smiled, "Yes, I really like it so everyone calls me little red riding hood."

Chapter 133: Neapolitan Cake

"You're little red riding hood?"

Even though Lin Sanjiu had an inkling about that, she couldn't help asking when she heard those words.

Just then, she suddenly found herself sitting in the flower-field again.

"Huh?"

The warm rays of the sun shone down from above, there was a grassy aroma in the air and she could hear the sound of the breeze threading through the flower field. She looked around and saw no one.

While she sat, Lin Sanjiu saw that there was a bent daisy by her feet. From the imprint in the grass, she must have been lying down previously. She knew she was still in the pocket dimension, but she couldn't figure out what had just happened. "What was that? Was I dreaming?" she mumbled to herself as she stood up.

The forest where she met little red riding hood was quite some distance from where she was. She strained her eyes and looked at the forest but she did not see anyone. It seemed as if she just had a dream about that lively, bubbly red girl with a red hooded cape.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know if dreaming in this pocket dimension had some sort of implication, but she knew she wasn't sleeping just now...

She massaged her temples, but still couldn't make sense of the supposed dream she had. Meanwhile, she felt another sense of urgency. As she did not have a watch on her, and knowing that a pocket dimension doesn't follow the logical flow of time, she didn't know how long she had been in here. That is, on top of the fact that she just "woke up from a dream". When she thought about the other women fighting out there, Lin Sanjiu took a sharp breath to

calm herself down and control her feeling of helplessness. Next, she just chose a direction and started walking.

In any case, the objective of the pocket dimension was definitely beyond just making her have unexplainable dreams. The only strategy Lin Sanjiu had was to try to find some sort of clue or hint...

"Are you lost?"

Lin Sanjiu was a little startled when she heard a sweet, tender female voice. Lin Sanjiu took a few steps back, and although she appeared expressionless, the shock she received was beyond description. Though Lin Sanjiu did not gain any levels for her physical enhancements, as a Growth type, her five senses and agility were gradually but constantly improving. That meant that her physical capabilities were far superior to any normal human. It was impossible that a normal person could get close to her without her noticing anything.

Yet, the teenage girl in front of her definitely wasn't a posthuman.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I mean you harm," the teenage girl said apologetically when she noticed that she might have startled Lin Sanjiu.

Lin Sanjiu composed herself and looked at the teenage girl before her. The girl looked about sixteen and had a head of golden, blond hair which shimmered under the blue sky as if they would melt into the sun rays. Though the girl was beautiful, there was a dust of plaster on her skin and she was carrying a basket of clothes. The girl was wearing a dusty old dress. Its design was absolutely unsuitable for a girl her age as it did not even have a waist seam.

The girl sensed Lin Sanjiu's judging eyes and quickly lowered her head, as if slightly embarrassed. She pulled her dress and tried to hide her pair of dirty old shoes from Lin Sanjiu's sight.

[This... must be a character in this pocket dimension?] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself. This was the only reason that could explain how the girl could get close without her noticing. "I'm Lin Sanjiu and I'm indeed lost... Could you tell me where I am?" Lin Sanjiu smiled faintly, but she did not let down her guard, and instead poised herself for any sudden movement by the teenager.

"I live in a settlement near here. If you want to go to the market, you can follow me. I can show you the way," the golden-haired maiden offered, smiling. She did not seem to notice Lin Sanjiu tensed stare. She turned and pointed at a road, while her locks of golden hair flowed down her shoulders following her gesture, "Look over there, you can follow that road. You can go over that hill and you will find my settlement."

Lin Sanjiu saw a road she didn't notice previously when she looked in the given direction and sensed that the girl might be harmless after all. Lin Sanjiu relaxed and replied, "Thank you, I'll be counting on you."

"You're welcome." The golden-haired maiden looked at her shyly, "I rarely see people like you around here. You look kind."

The souls of the countless lives she had taken might not agree with that view, but Lin Sanjiu nodded and thanked the maiden again, "What is your name?"

"Oh! Pardon my manners. I should have introduced myself! But —"

She looked visibly disheartened as she continued, "Nobody calls me by my real name now, not even my father. My sisters call me Cinderella. You can call me by that name too."

Lin Sanjiu's face quickly contorted into a grimace as she pinched her own wrist. [I just had a dream about little red riding hood, and now here comes Cinderella... Is this a fairytale world? But if I'm right, then where did little red riding hood go?]

"I don't like to think about my stepmother and stepsisters when I'm alone." Cinderella squished her face and quickly forced a smile. "Well, since you seem like a traveler. Maybe you could tell me some stories about the lands faraway."

Rather than whatever stories from far, far away, Lin Sanjiu was far more interested to get more information about this place. She furrowed her brows as she tried to sort out the messy thoughts in her head. She did not say a word and Cinderella did not push her to reply, instead she just walked a little slower out of consideration.

They continued walking for some time under the same circumstances. When Lin Sanjiu heard the 'clippity clop' of a horse carriage on a cobbled street, she realized that the settlement was just right ahead. It was a typical medieval european settlement with short houses built from stone. There were a few peasant women on the street, with large bouquets of flowers and chickens following them. In the middle of the small provincial town, there was a tiny plaza with a well. A cat laid lazily at the edge of the well, licking its own tail.

Lin Sanjiu was 100% percent sure that she wouldn't be able to find this town if she was alone.

"You seemed troubled, traveler," Cinderella spoke using a stereotypical tone that fairytale characters use.

"Um, well... That's right!" Lin Sanjiu suddenly had an idea, "As you know, I'm from a very faraway place. It's getting dark and I don't have a place to stay. I was wondering if I could stay at your place for a night."

Cinderella's jaw dropped. She looked at Lin Sanjiu and at the bright, mid-afternoon sun.

"Actually, I'm fine with it," as proven, the famous Cinderella was a very kind person, but she continued hesitatingly, "but, I am not sure if my stepmother and stepsisters will agree..."

"I can pay for the night!" Lin Sanjiu quickly added, "I brought many treasures from afar, I just need to stay one night and I will let them choose what they like!"

Lin Sanjiu had all sorts of paraphernalia that she retrieved from the supermarket. She figured that it wouldn't be difficult to shock someone from the medieval period. Cinderella seemed to know her stepmother very well. She hesitated for a few seconds and nodded before she led Lin Sanjiu to her house.

"This is my house." Cinderella looked dejected when she said this. It was a beautiful three-storey mansion. After they walked through the metal gates, they had to walk past a large garden before they reached the door. "Wait here. I'll check with my stepmother if she approves."

"Sure." Lin Sanjiu quickly replied while she watched Cinderella enter the house.

"Sigh..." Lin Sanjiu sighed while many passing pleasants stared at her inquisitively. She felt very weary. "What do I have to do in this pocket dimension?" She closed her eyes and massaged her face and tried not to think about Garden of Eden and whether anyone was hurt.

"I hope Li Tao and the others are okay..." Lin Sanjiu mumbled to herself. She was stunned when she opened her eyes.

Once again, she found herself lying in the flower-field. She noticed the same welcoming sun, the gentle breeze with the grassy aroma and that daisy squished by her feet.

The town, the passersby and Cinderella's house disappeared like a popped bubble, even without her noticing, they disappeared without a trace. Lin Sanjiu bit her trembling lower lips and looked at her wrist. There was a clear red mark from when she previously pinched herself. When she touched it, it still hurt slightly.

Just then, she heard a slightly peculiar sound. Still in a daze, Lin

Sanjiu looked around and spotted a woman not far from her.

The woman had black hair and was in her twenties. Her hair was styled beautifully and she was wearing an unusually long dress which spread over the ground. Her face was flushed and she was waving a crystal goblet in her hand. The sun rays pierced through the wine-filled goblet and diffused into shades of deep-red.

"Why are you in my garden?" the woman asked with a groggy voice. The young woman did not seem to be really bothered by Lin Sanjiu's presence. She observed her goblet lazily with her half-opened eyes, "You! You probably never seen such a perfect crystal goblet like this, right? I think the king doesn't even have half the amount of treasures in the house behind my back."

Lin Sanjiu stared at her blankly.

"There is even a full-length mirror in the house. You can see yourself from top to bottom. They are all treasures that nobody had seen before..." the black-haired woman tilted her head and laughed out. She leaned in her chair and let the crystal goblet fall to the ground. Red wine stained the corners of her dress. "But with a husband like that, how can I be happy even with all the treasures in the world..."

"F*ck!" Lin Sanjiu cursed softly before she cautiously prompted, "Your husband is..."

The black-haired woman patted her own red cheeks and replied with unfocused eyes, "He isn't good-looking. He has a large blue beard, so everyone calls him Bluebeard. Have you heard of him before?"

[It is way beyond just hearing about him before.] Lin Sanjiu pounded her fist on the ground. [What the hell is wrong with this pocket dimension!]

Chapter 134: Neapolitan Cake (2)

Carrying the drunken woman was like carrying a large heavy rock wrapped in a long, beautiful dress, she definitely weighed heavier than usual. Despite that, it wasn't that hard for Lin Sanjiu to carry Lila into the house.

"Ah... you're so strong." Lila blurted, sending a waft of alcoholic breath in Lin Sanjiu's direction. Lin Sanjiu turned her head aside and Lila giggled and touched her face, "It would be great if you were a guy."

Luckily, the [Versu Poison] on Lin Sanjiu's body had already been used up in Garden of Eden, otherwise Lila would have died on the spot. Lin Sanjiu kept a straight face and ignored the woman. She walked wordlessly through the garden until she reached the side door of a small castle. She bumped the door with her body and the wooden door squeaked open. Lila must have left it open.

"Go upstairs. Go upstairs. My bedroom is upstairs, I want to let you see my gorgeous bedroom..."

Lin Sanjiu sighed and shifted the woman onto her shoulder, carrying her like a sack of potatoes. While Lin Sanjiu climbed up the stairs, Lila lit the candles on the wall in her drunken state.

Under the flickering light of the candles, the gothic ceilings of the castle appeared higher and even more mysterious. Lila wasn't exaggerating. The interior of the castle had an exquisite architecture. There were all sorts of tapestries of some unknown style on the walls. Silver candle holders with carved flower motif filled the entire castle. There was a clock covered with jewels and gems...

Somehow, the sky had darkened. When Lin Sanjiu dumped Lila on a big bed, she could see from the window in the bedroom that the sky had already become a navy blue. Lila laid on her bed, face down. She mumbled something and finally kept quiet. The room

suddenly became silent.

"You don't even have a single servant?" When Lin Sanjiu saw that Lila had fallen asleep, she massaged her own temples. She did not know what she should do next. Considering her present circumstances, it seemed like she would have to stay here for the time being. With the main character of the storyline near her, she was sure that she would find some clues soon...

"When will Bluebeard return?" Lin Sanjiu murmured. She walked to the window to pull the red velvet curtains. The moment she touched the soft curtains, the sensation disappeared and she suddenly found herself stepping on a dried branch. It broke with a crisp sound which quickly melted into the dark silent forest.

A girl with a red cape and a basket was just some distance ahead of her. Lin Sanjiu was stupefied as she surveyed her surroundings.

Though this wasn't her first time, she could not repress her shock. Lila's room had disappeared and when Lin Sanjiu looked up she could only see the branches of countless old trees form the canopy of the forest which blocked the sky from view. There was barely any light in the forest so her white shirt was now closer to a shade of dark blue.

A cold, emotionless wind swept through the forest, rustling the leaves on the trees, making the forest more isolated and gloomier than it really was.

"What's wrong? If we don't hurry, it will be night soon." Red riding hood turned to look at Lin Sanjiu.

"It's nothing. I'm just distracted," Lin Sanjiu said quietly, letting out another sigh.

"Hey, if we walk a little more, we will reach it soon." Red riding hood chirped as she pointed to somewhere in the distance. Apparently, she did not hear Lin Sanjiu's previous reply. Lin Sanjiu made an affirmative sound and looked in the direction she

pointed. Amidst the old trees, she managed to make out the roof of a wooden cottage.

"The sky is a little overcast. I hope it doesn't rain." Red riding hood looked up at the sky, pulled her hood closer to her face and quickened her pace. "My granny hates rainy days."

"Why?" Lin Sanjiu asked casually.

"Because there are fewer guests on rainy days."

"Guests?" Lin Sanjiu was sure that the story did not mention that the grandmother ran any sort of business...

"Oh, I haven't mentioned this to you," Red riding hood suddenly lifted her chin, her eyes sparkled and she said proudly, "My granny is an erotic dancer."

"Erotic... what?"

Red riding hood seemed blissfully unaware of the impact her words had on her listener. "That's right! Even though my mom doesn't like granny's job, and I'm not supposed to tell other about it, I feel that my granny is so cool!"

If the girl's grandmother was in her teens when she had a child, she might be in her late thirties. If she maintained her figure, it wouldn't really be that unreasonable that she was a dancer...

Lin Sanjiu's initial thought was that she could get some clues to leave the pocket dimension if she followed the main characters of the stories, but now she genuinely wanted to meet Red riding hood's grandmother.

Grey clouds loomed over their heads as if it was about to rain. The two people walked for some time and finally the green scenery around them abated, revealing a plot of open land. A small wooden cottage sat in the middle of a clearing in the forest. It looked old and the paint on its wooden walls was peeling. The only sign that someone was living in that house was a single fresh red flower in a vase by the side of the door. Not far from them, there were a few

other cottages hidden within the forest.

"Is this your granny's house?" Lin Sanjiu pointed at the dilapidated cottage.

"Yes! The other cottages are resting huts used by the hunters around here." Red riding hood noticed that Lin Sanjiu seemed curious about the other cottages nearby so she explained, "But they are weird people."

"Why?"

"They always badmouth my granny. But when she walked past them, they would just stare." Red riding hood suddenly used a serious tone, "Do you know, my granny is really awesome! She danced for the king in the past. You have never seen the king before, right?"

Lin Sanjiu stealthily pulled her mouthpart weapon from behind her. In the fairytale, the wolf was posing as the grandmother by this point, and though they did not meet any sort of wolf-like person on their journey here, Lin Sanjiu reasoned that it was because this was a pocket dimension.

A woman coughed. "Red riding hood, is that you? Why did you travel such a long way here?" a woman asked from behind the door, her voice sounded nasally.

The person opened the door while she said this and a normal female face appeared from behind the door. As Lin Sanjiu had guessed, the woman was perhaps only in her late thirties and her hair was a healthy brown. Though the woman looked pale, she had a pair of alluring, uptilted eyes and an aura of matured beauty.

[It is not a wolf.] Lin Sanjiu breathed a sigh of relief and turned her weapon back into a card.

Red riding hood's grandmother looked at Lin Sanjiu, puzzled, "This is?"

"I told you about her. She is a traveler from a faraway place." Cinderella spoke cordially in her gentle voice to a middle-aged woman, there was a hint of caution in her voice.

Lin Sanjiu was about to take a step into the wooden house when she pulled her foot back. She lost her balance and nearly fell to the ground. This instantly drew the attention of the middle-aged woman and the two younger women behind her.

Lin Sanjiu saw a well-decorated living room with a thick wool rug on the floor. The wood in the fireplace in the living room was cackling noisily. Lin Sanjiu watched the middle-aged woman's judging eyes and regained her balance while Cinderella's stepsisters chuckled. She rolled her eyes and took a deep breath, "Um, hello madame." Lin Sanjiu felt as if she could still see the afterimages of the wooden cottage in the forest despite the fact that the situation had changed.

The middle-aged woman was probably a little worried about the weird, clumsy woman. She sat up straight on her comfortable couch and glared at Lin Sanjiu, "You wish to stay in our house for a night?"

"Yes," Lin Sanjiu remembered what she said to Cinderella, "if you let me stay here for a night, I will let you and your daughters choose something from my many treasures."

The middle-aged woman immediately leaned back in her chair and pursed her lips. "I don't care for your treasure. As you can see, we are rich." While she said that, she flicked her hand at Cinderella as if chasing a dog away. "But, I am interested in exotic things..."

From her tone, Lin Sanjiu could tell that the woman wanted to have a look at what she could offer. Cinderella's two stepsisters were not as restrained as their mother. They beckoned for Lin Sanjiu to show them what she brought.

"Okay. Okay. My bag is outside so I just have to go get it..."

Lin Sanjiu was not going to take her things out from nowhere in front of the women, so she made up an excuse and headed for the door while she considered the items she had.

Meanwhile, Charlotte and Katy whispered to each other behind her back, though Lin Sanjiu could easily hear their conversation.

"I wonder if she really has anything good."

"I wish she had some nice hair accessories..."

"Oh, or maybe some wonderful fabrics. Just like the dress that the princess wore last week..."

Lin Sanjiu paused and quickly turned behind in shock. "Which princess? Where is she from? Is she so unbelievably beautiful that the prince spent the entire night dancing with her and no one else?"

—

[So Cinderella had already danced with the prince? How many times did she dance with the prince? Did she already lose her glass slipper?] As she thought about this, she found herself walking into Lila's bedroom.

She was really going insane...

Chapter 135: Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf

After shuffling between the three stories for quite a few times, Lin Sanjiu was exhausted. She sighed and laid on top of a wooden table. The wooden table was extremely hard. Even though Emma, Red riding hood's grandmother, had placed a thin mattress over it, Lin Sanjiu could feel the uncomfortably hard surface. Compared to Lila, Emma's life was too tough. The small wood cottage had only one room which served as both a bedroom and a living room. She did not have even one guest bed and the only furniture which looked a little more expensive was a mirror that the king had given to her as a gift. Mirrors were hard to produce in the past, so they were considered rare luxuries.

Light reflected off the polished surface of the mirror as Lin Sanjiu flipped in her makeshift bed a few times. As the granddaughter and grandmother chatted softly, the anxiety she felt was like a fire which burnt away any chance of her sleeping.

It was night time at all three places.

First, Lila was pulling her arm, requesting for her to sleep in the same large bed. Then, she found herself banished by the stepmother to a small room. She was to share a straw bed with Cinderella. When she opened her eyes again in Emma's house, she had lost all sense of time.

As everything around her was changing all the time, Lin Sanjiu couldn't even estimate how long she had been in the pocket dimension.

Had Xueqin and the rest seen her letter? Could they trust the escape route provided by Gong Daoyi? Most importantly, how was she ever going to get out of this pocket dimension?

Currently, even though she was an extra character in all the

stories, the stories seemed to be progressing normally. The only thing which hasn't happen was that the big bad wolf had not appeared in red riding hood's story...

[Could this be the key?]

But, Lin Sanjiu had not even made sense of the goal of this pocket dimension. She could only sigh. The house went quiet after she sighed and Red riding hood asked quietly, "What is bothering you?"

"No, I'm fine." Lin Sanjiu replied hastily and felt that Emma was watching her. "I just need to get to somewhere urgently, so I am feeling a bit anxious..."

When they were sharing the cake that Red riding hood had brought, Emma had tried to get more information about Lin Sanjiu. Perhaps, she had a complicated past, so she was more guarded than her granddaughter. Though she couldn't find anything wrong with Lin Sanjiu's reply, Emma chose to sleep on the side of the bed closer to Lin Sanjiu and let her granddaughter sleep on the other side. As they chatted quietly for some time, they suddenly heard the sound of rain hitting against the windows. Through the windows, Lin Sanjiu could see the rain getting heavier and heavier. Soon, raindrops were violently assaulting the small dilapidated little cottage.

Lin Sanjiu couldn't help thinking about what Red riding hood said about having no guests. She suddenly asked without thinking, "Emma, where do you... umm dance? The rain looks really heavy today."

"Smack!" There was a sudden sound in the darkness. This was followed by a yelp from Red riding hood. The little girl was hit by her grandmother.

"This little girl always spout nonsense..." Emma sounded a little embarrassed, "That was years ago. I've stopped after my daughter started avoiding me. Right now, I basically sell some handicraft for

survival." Emma shared a little more perhaps considering that Lin Sanjiu was also a woman and did not seem to look down on her.

"After I stopped dancing, my relationship with my daughter is getting better... See. When she heard that I was unwell, she sent Red riding hood here to give me a cake." She seemed a little gratified after saying that.

Lin Sanjiu had a sudden urge to ask if they had ever seen other "travelers from other lands", but before she could ask, she was interrupted by a series of barks outside. A number of dogs were barking loudly outside, and the noise got closer and closer to the door.

The three people in the house quickly got up and rushed over to the windows. Through the pouring rain, the three of them could see the black figures of a few dogs. They were large dogs which stood at almost the height of half a human. They were barking crazily at the small cottage.

Red riding hood grew frightened and quickly held Lin Sanjiu with her small cold hand. She looked at her grandmother and asked with a sobbing voice, "Whose dogs are those? Why are they acting this way? It's scary."

Emma's face had turned a little pale, "They are Ive's dogs..."

Her words seemed to suggest that the man called Ive was one of the hunters around this area. Lin Sanjiu wasn't even half worried about the dogs, not even if they were some sort of demon dogs. She headed to the door and was about to say that she could chase them off when an angry male voice disrupted her thought.

"Emma! Are you alive?"

Emma was stunned. Though she was slightly confused by the question, she quickly regained her composure and yelled out, "Link, I'm here." Then, she went to open the door.

She had barely opened the door when a person pulled the door

from outside and shut it again. Emma's hand hung in mid-air as she stared at the wooden door. Her expression turned dark.

"Is this some sort of prank?" She inhaled sharply before she shouted at the door, "My little red riding hood is here today! You're scaring her. Bring those dogs away!"

The men stopped talking when they heard her words. The dogs continued barking madly as if they could bark the house down. After a few seconds, a man finally spoke, "Are there only two of you in the house?"

Lin Sanjiu was shocked and slowly turned to look at Emma. "I have another guest." Emma looked out from the window stiffly, "Why did you ask me that question?"

Lin Sanjiu could see that Emma's knuckles turned white as she gripped the edge of the window.

"Ive! Richard! Bring the dogs to the garden!"

The man called Link called out to two other men before he turned to the wooden cottage again. "I realized that something was amiss, so I quickly called Ive and Richard to help..."

"Despite the heavy rain, our hunting dogs are still behaving so erratically, my assumption must be right."

"In your house, there must be a werewolf amongst you."

Chapter 136: Cinderella's Crystal Shoes

At that critical moment, Lin Sanjiu felt herself waking up from a bed of prickly straws. Faint light entered her eyes and before she could react to the changes, she jumped up, and dried straw fell off her body noisily. Cinderella was startled by her sudden action.

"What's wrong?" Cinderella asked kindly. The maiden's face and hands were covered with black soot, "You had a nightmare?"

"Me... Ah, yes." Lin Sanjiu blinked her eyes rapidly, trying to bring her senses back from the old cottage with the heavy rain and the barking dogs. It took her a few seconds to recover before looking out of the window. It was still dark outside and a crescent moon was in the sky. There wasn't even a hint of impending rain.

"What time is it now?" Lin Sanjiu calmed her breathing and looked at Cinderella, a little confused, "Why are you still working at this time?"

Cinderella sighed, "I always wake up at this time to do my chores. It will be dawn soon. I will need to prepare breakfast." After she said that, she paused and watched the stove in front of her in a daze. Lin Sanjiu could guess what she was thinking about. From the information she gathered, it had already been a month since the ball. Based on the normal chronological order, Cinderella would have already lost one of her shoes. Yet, even after almost a month, the prince wasn't looking for her...

To Cinderella, the bejewelled dress, the dazzling lights and the dance with the prince had all become but a dream. The dream had ended and she had to go back to her chores, kneeling in a dirty kitchen with dirt all over her hands.

[Is Cinderella's story reaching a climax just like the Little Red Riding Hood storyline?] Lin Sanjiu pondered as she excused herself saying she wanted to clean up. She walked outside and took stock of her cards. She handed Cinderella's stepmother some scented

candles and some torchlights. Though the woman accepted the 'payment' without making any comment, she did not hide her disappointment that Lin Sanjiu did not present her any pieces of jewelry. This also explained why she only arranged for Lin Sanjiu to sleep on straw.

After Lin Sanjiu finished taking stock of her cards, she placed her hand under her chin and began wondering about the two people in the little cottage. [Neither Red Riding Hood nor Emma look like werewolves... There was nothing unusual about their behavior. But then again, what is a werewolf like anyway?]

As Lin Sanjiu was deep in thought, the sky gradually grew brighter. After a busy morning, Cinderella made and brought the sets of breakfast to her stepmother and stepsisters. She made a simple meal of potatoes and peas for herself and shared some of it with Lin Sanjiu.

The taste wasn't fantastic but Lin Sanjiu was very grateful just to have something to eat. Cinderella giggled when she saw how Lin Sanjiu gobbled her food hungrily, "You must have had a difficult time traveling."

Her words struck a chord with Lin Sanjiu. If going through multiple New Worlds was her journey, she really didn't know where her destination was. Normally, Lin Sanjiu would curb herself from thinking about the countless New Worlds out there. She also tried her best to avoid thinking about her friends who had died or her companions she had lost contact with. But these feelings were like shifting silt under the water surface. Just a single sentence from Cinderella stirred these emotions she had been suppressing.

"Yeah, it is hard. I rarely get to eat a meal," she regained her composure and replied with a smile.

Cinderella hesitated when she saw Lin Sanjiu's expression. She wanted to say something but was interrupted by the noise outside.

They heard a male servant shouting, "Madame, Madame! Where are you? Come out now to welcome the palace head steward!"

[Here it comes...] Lin Sanjiu's heart pounded as she placed her bowl down and pulled Cinderella, who was still in a daze, through the mansion's back door. The large family mansion did not look as imposing as it usually was. The stepmother rushed out, holding the corners of her dress. It was clear that she just tidied her hair as there was still a sheen of oil over her hair. Cinderella's two stepsisters stood behind their mother. They had clearly put on makeup and adorned themselves with many jewelry. "Why is the head steward here?" Cinderella's stepmother asked after she caught her breath.

The head steward was a silver-haired middle-aged man with a stoic face. He had such a serious face that it would evoke the same expression in anyone who saw him.

"According to the prince's order, I have traveled the entire kingdom looking for a lady who can wear this shoe." After he explained himself in a business-like manner, he waved his arm and the servant behind him revealed a crystal slipper in a box. "Anyone who could wear this shoe would earn the privilege to be by the prince's side."

The crystal slipper shone clearly under the sun. Once it was revealed, Lin Sanjiu heard Cinderella soft gasp. Luckily, everyone was focused on the head steward and the slipper so no one else noticed.

The next series of events were quite similar to the fairytale. Even though it wasn't as gruesome as the fairytale where the stepsisters cut off their heels and toes to fit their feet into the slipper, it took them a lot of effort. They bound their feet with strips of clothes, forcing their toes under their feet, creating a sort of western foot binding. Despite the pain, they were unable to squeeze their feet into the slipper as the crystal slipper did not provide any extra space. It only fit its true owner perfectly. The head steward even

wanted Lin Sanjiu to try but when he saw her pair of timberland boots, he immediately rejected that idea.

In the end, Cinderella was a little nervous when she slipped her dainty, small feet into the crystal slipper. Lin Sanjiu was startled when the people around her let out cries of shock and exclamation. "That's great!" the head steward said with the same stoic face, showing no hint of happiness. "We finally found you. I am sure the prince would be pleased."

Cinderella blushed and allowed the female servants from the palace to pull her up. After she bathed and wore makeup, she finally showed her beautiful appearance like in the ball. Being in a fairytale and witnessing the main character go through various events was a wonderful experience for Lin Sanjiu. As there were too many people in the main hall, Lin Sanjiu had to watch from the window of the second floor as the head steward brought Cinderella away cordially, towards a specially-crafted carriage.

From Lin Sanjiu's memory, the prince should appear at this point and would give the order to punish Cinderella's stepmother and the stepsisters.

[Is the prince sitting in that carriage?] The events which unfolded seemed to prove that she was right. The head steward said something to the person in the carriage and invited Cinderella to step into it. Cinderella looked into the carriage and turned to speak with the head steward. Then, she waved her hands anxiously...

[Huh?] Lin Sanjiu squinted. Cinderella's expression looked weird. Her face was a little pale as she shook her head violently. As Lin Sanjiu was too far away, she couldn't really hear what they were saying. Cinderella looked like she didn't say much and quickly turned to walked away. However, she was suddenly stopped by two tall soldiers. They grabbed Cinderella and stuffed her into the carriage forcefully.

Cinderella struggled, kicking her two feet which were still

outside the carriage, but it seemed like someone in the carriage was preventing her from escaping. Meanwhile, the wheels of the carriage started moving and it was about to leave the estate. The people in the mansion became silent when they saw this.

[This is a critical difference!] Lin Sanjiu gritted her teeth and leaped out of the window when nobody was noticing. The impact of her landing numbed her legs but before the dust settled on the ground, she had already covered a significant distance and was sprinting behind the carriage. As she did not know what had happened, she did not use her maximum speed to chase after the carriage. Instead, she just observed while she allowed some distance between herself and the carriage.

Thankfully, the kingdom wasn't that big and they reached the palace in less than 20 minutes. After all, those people managed to get all the girls in the kingdom to try that slipper. As the palace was quite small, it was very easy for Lin Sanjiu to search the entire place, as if there were no security at all. It took her only 20 minutes to find Cinderella in an elegantly decorated room. Cinderella's face was pale and covered with streaks of tears. However, she did not seem shocked to see Lin Sanjiu.

"The prince who danced with me isn't that man." She sobbed.

Chapter 137: Neapolitan Cake (3)

[If the person who took Cinderella wasn't the prince, who could it be?] This was the question in Lin Sanjiu's mind when she stepped back and hit Emma's dining table.

It took a few milliseconds before she processed the sound of rain and of barking dogs. She quickly looked around, realizing where she was. The cottage was dimly lit but Lin Sanjiu could see Red Riding Hood hiding behind Emma. The scared girl clutched her grandmother's clothes with both hands and peeked at Lin Sanjiu.

The interior of the cottage was lit with a bright light every time a bolt of lightning flashed across the sky, at that same time, the knife in Emma's hand was revealed.

Lin Sanjiu knew it was useless but she couldn't help defending herself, "I am not a werewolf..."

However, Emma did not even look at her. Instead, she held her knife tightly with her trembling hands and shouted to the men outside, "It's here! She must be the werewolf. Please think of a way to save us!"

Lin Sanjiu sighed. She didn't even know what a werewolf should look like, and she had no way of judging who was lying. It wasn't even that hard for her to incapacitate or kill everyone, ironically, that was the reason why Lin Sanjiu did not dare to act rashly. Besides, she didn't know what the consequences in the pocket dimension were if the characters of the story died...

Through the pouring rain, Lin Sanjiu understood from the shouts of the hunters outside that their plan was to rush into the house. If they came in, the situation would become even more complicated. Lin Sanjiu walked towards the side of the door and showed a bitter smile at the cautious-looking Emma and Red Riding Hood.

"I am not a werewolf and I don't know who is the real werewolf. But I won't be far. If you are in danger, just call for help." She didn't know who exactly she should direct these words to but she pulled open the door right after she said that. One of the hunters who was leaning against the door tumbled into the cottage once Lin Sanjiu opened the door. Before the men could take out their weapons, she threw the hunter aside and dashed outside like a leopard. She knocked the men and dogs coming at her and disappeared into the rain in a few seconds.

The hunter who got up from the ground wanted to continue chasing her, but was it even possible?

The hunters ran after Lin Sanjiu, refusing to just give up. However, they couldn't even see much in a forest at night, let alone with the heavy downpour. They had no choice but to return to Emma's cottage after chasing for a short distance.

When Emma saw the hunters, she dropped the knife in her hands. The knife fell with a clunk as Emma hugged Red Riding Hood tightly. With more people around, Emma and Red Riding Hood became less frightened. After she calmed down, Emma lit the candles and quickly served the men water. She brought towels for them to dry themselves and thanked them profusely. At this point, however, the dogs were still barking. "I guess they won't calm down anytime soon," Ive muttered and then he went out to pacify the hunting dogs. While the dogs still barked every now and then, the group of people had already agreed through their discussion that the woman in the weird outfit was the werewolf.

Red Riding Hood bit her lips while she watched each of the people around her carefully. Noticing that it was really late, Link stood up first, "We will leave now. Please be careful."

"Yes," Emma dodged his eyes and sent the men out, "I am really grateful for your help today."

Ive's dog was still restless but it kept quiet after he pulled on its

leash. The hunters left with their dogs and soon their figures disappeared into the rain as if a few strokes of watercolor on a painting.

Emma watched as they left and closed the door. When she turned, she saw Red Riding Hood's bright black eyes looking at her. In an instant, she felt her hair stand on end.

"Granny," Red Riding Hood called her softly. In the cottage, which had returned to its previous silence and darkness, Emma could not see her granddaughter's expression.

"What... what is wrong, dear?" Emma wasn't sure why her voice was shaking. Under the darkness, Red Riding Hood took a step toward Emma. Emma unconsciously stepped backward towards the window.

"I want to ask you something." Red Riding Hood's voice sounded a little weird.

Emma threw a quick glance at the knife on the floor as she remembered how the dogs were still barking.

"Dearie, come over here to talk to me. Granny wants to see your face." Emma gathered her courage and smiled at the girl.

Unexpectedly, Red Riding Hood agreed obediently and walked toward the window. The light from the flashes of lightning revealed Red Riding Hood's normal face. Though it was a little pale, that definitely wasn't the face of a werewolf. Emma let out a sigh of relief as she silently blamed herself for suspecting her granddaughter.

Before she could calm herself, Red Riding Hood asked her a question which froze her brain. "Granny, how many hunters came to help us just now?"

Emma thought about it, she felt that her cold must have clouded her judgment, "There were three, three men!" When she said that, she suddenly realized that there was something wrong about that.

It wasn't a large number but she didn't know why she was hesitating.

"Link, Ive and Richard... right?" Red Riding Hood continued.

"Yes, yes..." Emma couldn't remember anyone else, "What's the problem?"

"But four people left our house." Red Riding Hood pressed her white finger against the cold window.

"Huh... Who is that?"

The same question which surfaced in Emma's mind was spat out by Link a few moments later.

As they all wanted to return to their homes quickly to dry the wet clothes on their body, the bold and experienced hunters decided to walk through the forest, like what Lin Sanjiu did. The shortcut they took was just a small narrow trail that naturally formed over the years. The dense forest and the rain made it very hard to see, and they walked for some time in silence. The poor visibility was also the reason why the hunters failed to spot immediately what was amiss. Link turned to look behind him casually and suddenly realized that something was wrong.

Ive wasn't that tall...

But there were only three of them in the forest, including that tall figure. Being a hunter with 20 years of experience, Link quickly pulled Richard to his side and drew his sword nimbly, "Who are you? Where is Ive?"

[Is that person the female werewolf?]

The tall figure paused and answered, "Huh? I am Richard. Isn't Ive by your side?"

[Yeah, Richard is tall too.] Before he felt relieved, Link's callus covered hand felt a rough, prickly, needle-like sensation.

Following which, his memory became hazy...

He could only remember waving his sword with all his might, fearfully. Then, he heard Richard's startled voice, the sound of pouring rain, the clashing between two tall figures and he felt the intense pain as something sharp pierced his stomach...

Link lost consciousness for some time until the heavy cold shower of rain woke him again. By then, he only had a vague memory of what had just happened. He saw Richard's corpse nearby. Despite the heavy rain, there was still a heavy scent of blood in the air. The corpse was intact and it did not look like the werewolf fed on him. [But if the werewolf's goal isn't to eat us, why did it attack us?] Link didn't have the energy to think of a reason. With his body's primitive instinct to survive, he crawled slowly toward the path just outside the forest. It was a main route to the city so people would come by every now and then. If he could reach it, his chance of surviving would improve. As he crawled on the ground, the fallen leaves on the forest ground, the pebbles, and the mud contaminated his wound and dug into his flesh. Just when Link was about to faint, a sudden scream from a child pierced through the rainy night.

Lin Sanjiu was at the top of a tree on the other side of the forest when she heard the scream. Her body tensed up. It was Red Riding Hood's voice. Lin Sanjiu slid down the tree and sprinted toward Emma's cottage.

As she didn't dare to harm any of the characters and didn't dare to get too close, she found herself crouching in a tree. She had been listening carefully for any movements for the cottage, but ever since the noisy men and dogs left, the cottage was silent. All she could hear was the sound of the heavy rain.

The distance from where she was to the cottage was nothing to Lin Sanjiu. She saw the cottage in a matter of ten seconds. The cottage was totally dark and the door was wide open. Red Riding Hood cried out again, "Granny!"

[Damn it. The werewolf must be hiding inside the cottage.] Lin

Sanjiu cursed inwardly. She was reaching the cottage when her vision blurred. The raindrops which lashed against her skin all this while suddenly stopped.

Lila was a little astonished to see Lin Sanjiu. Lin Sanjiu was still running and was about to crash into a dining table. She quickly twisted her body and stopped herself. It was only then that she realized that her clothes were once again dry and comfortable. Lila was still holding a goblet in her hand which was filled with a transparent liquid. Judging from her reddish face, it was definitely wine.

"What are you doing? You're so weird." Lila pinched Lin Sanjiu playfully, "You have stayed for a quite a few days but I still don't understand you... Hey, did you actually listen to what I said just now?"

Lin Sanjiu steadied her pounding heart and she looked at the scrumptious spread on the table. "I didn't hear you properly. What were you saying?" she asked a little rudely.

Oddly, Lila was not angry at Lin Sanjiu and was always friendly to her, "Oh gosh! I told you that my husband gave me all the keys to the rooms in this castle but he doesn't allow me to open the door at the end of the corridor of the second floor. What do you think is in that room?"

Chapter 138: Lila's Blood Stained Key

"I know." Lin Sanjiu gave Lila a perfunctory reply while she remained in her daze. From her previous experience, she knew that every time she left the particular storyline, she wouldn't return to the point she left. The story would continue to move forward even without her—which meant, the next time she returned to Red Riding Hood's story, she would have missed the opportunity to save both Emma and Red Riding Hood.

If both of them were really attacked by the werewolf, Lin Sanjiu couldn't imagine how they would survive. If the main character of the storyline died, Lin Sanjiu wondered what would happen to the pocket dimension and herself. Just when Lin Sanjiu was at wit's end, Lila stopped with her knife and fork above her plate, and scrutinized Lin Sanjiu.

"Hey," Lila called her softly while pouting as if she was a little dissatisfied, "What are you thinking about? Why are you ignoring me?"

Lin Sanjiu finally got a grip on herself. In any case, she was already out of Red Riding Hood's story. The only thing she could do now was to look for clues within this current story.

"Nothing much. I'm just curious about that key," she smiled at Lila.

With that, she managed to change the focus of their conversation. Lila stopped, straightening her blue silk dress, "Oh... what do you think he keeps in that room?"

Lin Sanjiu took a sip of water, trying to conceal her intentions as she calmed herself. She had taken a spectator role for both Red Riding Hood's and Cinderella's story, and without her involvement, there was a weird turn of events in both stories... This time, she decided to do something different here with Lila.

"Why don't we..." Lin Sanjiu picked up a piece of prawn nonchalantly, "...take a look?"

She did not expect that her words would startle Lila. Lila nearly dropped her fork, "Huh? We can't do that. My husband had emphasized that I must not open the door. If I enter that room. He will never forgive me..."

From her reaction, Lin Sanjiu realized that Lila had never considered peeping into the room before. This was something different from the normal story. [Maybe this is a chance to change something.] Lin Sanjiu skipped a beat. She froze, but then asked gingerly, "Aren't you curious? What is your husband hiding from you..."

Lila closed her eyes as her brows furrowed. Even though she was usually in a drunken stupor and always seemed preoccupied, she was surprisingly prudent. After thinking for some time, Lila picked a long key off the bunch of keys at her waist and placed it on the table. "This is the key to the small room," she shot a glance at Lin Sanjiu with a conflicted expression. "You're right, I really want to know what is in that room, so... I hope you can help me."

Lin Sanjiu was a little stunned, "Does it mean that you want me to look into the room on your behalf?"

Lila nodded, there was a glint of an inborn craftiness in the young woman's eyes. "If you look into the room and tell me what is inside, we aren't technically breaking my husband's rule."

[This is obviously different from the original story! Is this a critical turn?]

"Sure, I will do it now." Lin Sanjiu agreed swiftly and grabbed the key. She ran upstairs while Lila watched a little nervously. Bluebeard's castle wasn't that large, but it was about four stories tall. After staying here for a few days, Lin Sanjiu was fairly familiar with the place. She reached the corridor of the second story, it was the most elaborately decorated and most luxurious-looking level in

the entire castle. The walls on both sides of the corridor were filled with paintings after paintings of Bluebeard's ancestors. The people in the portraits seemed to be watching anyone who was walking along the corridor.

When she was just about to reach the last room, Lin Sanjiu suddenly stopped. She took two steps back and slowly turned her eyes towards something. It was a full-length mirror which could show a person's reflection from head to toe. With the technological level in the current era, a mirror of such clarity wasn't something which could be seen anywhere—besides, the silver frame of the mirror looked very familiar to Lin Sanjiu. The mirror in Emma's cottage seemed the same... or rather it was the exact mirror she saw in Emma's cottage.

Even though Lin Sanjiu could not understand the significance of this matter, she could feel her blood flow speeding up. This was the first time she found something common among the three stories. After contemplating for a while, she curbed herself from rushing downstairs to question Lila about the origins of the mirror. Instead, she touched the mirror cautiously and gritted her teeth before she walked toward the room.

Anyone who knew the story of Bluebeard would clearly remember what was behind the door. Even though a room filled with corpses wasn't a pretty sight, just to be sure, Lin Sanjiu stuck the key into the keyhole and turned the key. The lock clicked and the door opened. A gush of cool air escaped into the corridor.

Oddly, the room did not have a single scent of blood. Lin Sanjiu narrowed her eyes and looked into the room. It was very dark and other than a few vague silhouettes hanging from the ceiling, she couldn't see anything else clearly. She did not plan to scrutinize the dead women. Her hand was still on the handle as she looked casually into the room and decided to leave. Just then, she spotted a light blue dress and she froze. It was a blue silk dress with a very recognizable design... Lin Sanjiu had just seen it, a few minutes

ago.

Lin Sanjiu looked upwards slowly. The woman hanging from the ceiling had long black hair which had been styled into a beautiful hairdo. She was slightly over 20 and had eye-catching red lips.

Lila.

She wasn't holding a goblet of wine and she wasn't smiling. The Lila she saw hanging from the ceiling had a pale white face and dead brown eyes which were staring at the entrance. Her neck was branded by two greenish-purple hand prints which dug into her skin. Her fair face was covered with a cobweb of greenish veins and red arteries.

Lin Sanjiu was certain that it was Lila. Lin Sanjiu quickly covered her own mouth. She did not know if she made any sound. Ever since the apocalypse, she really thought she had already seen and been through a lot, but this... this...

As she was panicking slightly, she lost balance and staggered a little. She held onto the door frame and managed to support herself. However, the key fell noisily from the keyhole. "Thud." It fell on the floor.

Lin Sanjiu took a few deep breaths but she couldn't muster the courage to look at Lila's dead body. She picked up the key and it was stained with blood, just like in the fairytale. The dead Lila looked at her.

The suppressed thoughts and emotions she had ever since she entered this pocket dimension suddenly emerged and erupted. The irrationality of the three stories, the confusion and disorder, the unexplainable developments, the anxiousness to get out of this pocket dimension, her concern for her companions...

She just turned and ran. Lin Sanjiu moved so fast that she flipped a few of the portraits. When she was downstairs, Lin Sanjiu was stupefied.

Lila was perfectly fine and was still sitting at the dining table. The woman was sipping the wine from her goblet, her skin and hair looked well. She tapped her crystal goblet lightly with her finger, making a soft tinkling sound.

[But she looks alive...]

"Oh, you're back. What did you see?"

Lila heard Lin Sanjiu and turned to her, asking a little impatiently, "Why do you look so pale? What did you see?"

Lin Sanjiu opened her mouth and stared blankly at the woman. She unconsciously looked toward the corridor once again. The woman in front of her was definitely alive, so what was the explanation behind what she saw hanging in the room?

Meanwhile, Lila noticed that the key in Lin Sanjiu's hand was stained with blood. In a moment of panic, she snatched it from Lin Sanjiu and wiped it feverishly with a napkin. As she cleaned the key, she anxiously asked, "Why is there blood on the key? Quick, tell me!"

Lin Sanjiu looked at the woman carefully from head to toe. She suddenly had an idea. "Come with me," she grabbed Lila's wrist and dragged her upstairs without giving her a chance to resist.

Chapter 139: A Killing Intent

When Lin Sanjiu stepped on the first stairstep, she felt as if she was about to enter another story. Her vision blurred for a second but when she composed herself and looked down, she was still standing on the stairs covered with a thick carpet. [Am I paranoid?] A shred of doubt flashed across Lin Sanjiu's mind. She held on to Lila's wrist and pulled her upstairs without giving her time to speak.

She hurried past the portraits and rushed in front of the mirror. Lin Sanjiu stopped suddenly and Lila nearly bumped into her back.

"Hey," Lin Sanjiu cleared her dry throat and gestured to the mirror with her chin, "Where is this mirror from?" She spoke extremely fast, afraid that she would be sent to another story any second later.

Lila looked at the mirror as directed by Lin Sanjiu, Lila's expression lightened, her fear and confusion visibly lessened when she replied, "This is mine!"

"Huh?" Lin Sanjiu turned to her.

"Even though my husband is very rich, he was impressed by this item from my dowry. It's rare." When she said this, she seemed to remember something as she touched the frame, "He mentioned a few times that he wanted to give this to the king, but I refused..."

When she heard this, Lin Sanjiu's heart skipped a beat while she vaguely remembered something. But she didn't have the time to ponder about that as she was afraid that she didn't have much time in this storyline. She interrupted Lila hastily, "Okay, come with me..."

Both women strutted quickly to the room at the end of the corridor. Lin Sanjiu took the key from Lila. The key felt dry in her hand as though the blood on it had seeped in. The key remained

red as the blood stained the crevices on the surface of the key. The stains wouldn't go away no matter how hard Lila tried to clean it just now. Lin Sanjiu ignored that detail and pushed open the door violently. She stared hard at Lila, "Look!"

Lila probably remembered her husband's words, so she looked uneasy but a little excited. She stretched her white neck forward. This evoked the image that Lin Sanjiu saw just moments before, the image of her neck covered with veins. Lila took a single glance and shrunk her head back, "There is a woman inside..."

[What?]

Lin Sanjiu froze for a second and looked into the room.

When she looked into the room again, she was speechless. The corpses dangling from the ceiling had all disappeared. The faint light in the room segregated the room into a few lit areas. The person that Lila saw seemed to be sitting at the far end of the room. Lila turned pale and stared at Lin Sanjiu, saying softly, "She... she looks like you..."

Lin Sanjiu did not make a single sound. Her eyes were glued to the woman in the room as she felt her blood turn cold. The woman looked unfamiliar to her at first glance, but after a few seconds, she saw the combat pants and boots, confirming that she was indeed 'Lin Sanjiu'.

Blood dripped from the fingertips of the other 'her', as her arm was injured. Even though the two women at the entrance had created a commotion, the 'Lin Sanjiu' seemed unaware of them. She was staring in the opposite direction. Lin Sanjiu was certain that the other her was very tensed and was wary of some other person.

However, the space she was staring into was empty.

"It's too weird... who are you, people..." Lila mumbled. Lin Sanjiu ignored her as she stepped forward in a daze.

"This isn't right." Lin Sanjiu moved her lips.

Lin Sanjiu found it very suspicious that the person in the room did not even turn to look at them or notice that there was someone at the door. [Could it be...] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself.

When she took one step forward, the room immediately became dimmer. Suddenly, multiple corpses appeared, hanging from the ceiling, filling the entire room. This happened as if proving that Lin Sanjiu was right. The corpses swung slowly from their ropes. Lila was shocked and let out a piercing scream when she saw the scene and collapsed at the entrance. Lin Sanjiu scanned the room and, just as expected, the other 'her' disappeared.

[Whatever we see in this room can't be real...]

The corpse of Lila she saw just now was now hidden at the back of other unfamiliar women. Although Lin Sanjiu had some inkling about what was happening, her throat felt parched. She was about to call Lila when the woman suddenly stammered as she stared ahead, "Isn't that Rosa from the neighboring province? Why is she dead?"

Lin Sanjiu frowned. She had the feeling that something was amiss but she couldn't put her finger on it. She followed Lila's lead and asked, "You know her?"

"I know her! In the past, every time we met at the ball, she would flaunt the newest items her parents bought for her..." Lila's voice was trembling terribly. "After I married Bluebeard, she never, she never..."

"Wait. Isn't she your husband's ex-wife?" Lin Sanjiu finally realized what was wrong. In Bluebeard's story, the main female character only realized that her life was in danger when she saw Bluebeard's seven ex-wives. After that, she sought her two brothers for help.

"Of course not," Lila wiped her tears. "My husband wasn't

married before. I am his only wife. What's the matter? You could scare someone with that face..." Lila was shocked when she saw Lin Sanjiu's expression.

Lin Sanjiu's face was white as a sheet. She couldn't utter a word as she stared at Lila. There were exactly seven corpse hanging from the ceiling. In Bluebeard's story, his wife's name was never mentioned. When Lila revealed her identity, Lin Sanjiu naturally assumed that she was the woman in the story who got away—Bluebeard's eighth wife.

From everything that had happened, if the story developed normally, Lila would die. The thought crept into Lin Sanjiu's mind. If Lila refused to offer the mirror to the king, how could the king give the mirror to Red Riding Hood's grandmother?

By now, she thought that she understood everything more or less. Lin Sanjiu bit her lips and dragged Lila away from the room. "We need to go. This room shows the future..." her voice was hoarse when she said this.

She didn't want the poor woman to see her own corpse so she pushed Lila out of the door. There was a pool of blood on the floor between herself and Lila. Once again, the key laid in the middle of that pool of blood. Other than that, everything else in the room was an illusion of the future.

If her conjecture was right, she would injure her right arm in the near future... That bit of injury did not bother Lin Sanjiu, who had found herself in this spiral of confusion. She sighed softly. Thinking about this story, she took the key that was near Lila and tried to lock the door.

Lila's lips were white and she was wringing her hands nervously. She did not know what to say and from the looks of it, she felt a little crazy. She watched Lin Sanjiu, who was unfamiliar with how old medieval locks worked. She tried a few times but was unable to lock the door. She wanted to say something when she heard a loud

sound. Next, a man's voice roared out, echoing through the corridor, "Lila! Where are you? Lila!"

No one expected that Bluebeard would return at this critical juncture. His voice nearly scared the soul out of Lila. She quickly muttered, "I'll come back." Then, she turned and ran downstairs while calling out, "Hi."

Her blue dress was stained with an unsightly patch of dark red blood, she had dirtied her dress when she fell by the entrance just now but she did not notice it at all.

When Lin Sanjiu saw it, she became very anxious. "Just wait for a mome— "

Just then, the door opened by itself with a creak as it was not locked properly. She cursed silently and turned her head involuntarily. She suddenly saw someone standing in the darkness. At that moment, she felt as if her heart had stopped. She only reacted after a split second. The person standing there was not real.

"Why would you appear here?" Lin Sanjiu smiled bitterly and mumbled to herself when she saw a very familiar face. Her mind was a mess, "Will you get hurt too?"

She quickly examined her friend and saw that she was alright. The person was not hurt so Lin Sanjiu was slightly relieved. Just then, she heard a sharp shriek from Lila. It struck a nerve and Lin Sanjiu dashed through the corridor.

[I should just kill Bluebeard—] Lin Sanjiu pursed her lips tightly as this thought surfaced in her mind. Her vision blurred and she was back outside Cinderella's door.

Chapter 140: Cinderella's Happily Ever After

Frankly speaking, despite how bizarre this pocket dimension was, this was the first time Lin Sanjiu witnessed "magic".

Lila's ear-piercing scream was still in her mind. That was already the second main character in danger. Lin Sanjiu tried her best to compose herself. Even though she had no idea if it would work, she stood motionless in the shadow and did her best to slow down her breathing and heartbeat, hoping no one would spot her.

The guard outside Cinderella's room was fast asleep and was lying limply on the ground. From a crack in the door, Lin Sanjiu could see that there was a glowing floating figure between herself and Cinderella.

The person was in a gray cloak and had a high hunchback like a tortoiseshell. The person's locks of gray, curly, messy hair hung from her shoulders onto her back. The wrinkly skin under the cloak was in no state better than the person's hair. The fairy's transparent wings looked like two deformed wings of a fly. Even if the person had all the features of a fairy, Lin Sanjiu couldn't accept that the person was the "Fairy Godmother" in the story.

As her view was blocked by this figure, she could not see Cinderella's expression. Lila's image disappeared from Lin Sanjiu's mind like a drowning person and finally, Lin Sanjiu calmed herself down. She turned her ears towards the door to listen to Cinderella's words, "I... I know. But the person who captured me and brought me to this palace isn't the prince..."

"Dearie, don't worry needlessly," the floating figure spoke. Lin Sanjiu was shocked by his voice. It was the voice of an elderly man. Even though he sounded old, there had been a slightly obsequious tone, "Our initial deal is that you would be with the prince. Since you already paid your end of the bargain, the outcome wouldn't

change..."

When he said this, he seemed to remember something and started giggling like a little girl. The elderly man lifted one of his hands and picked his long gray fingernails, "Of course, your wish was to leave your previous lifestyle and be with the prince. Don't worry. I don't break my promises. Though there might be some twists and turns, your wish will come true very soon."

"Thank you. Thank you!" Cinderella was finally relieved after she heard such a direct promise from the man and gave a heavy sigh of relief as if a heavy burden had been lifted off her chest. "The current events are too strange, so it scared me a little. Oh. That's right. Did you come to the palace to look for me?"

The old man giggled again. "There is a pathetic young man who wants an incredible amount of wealth. I'm here to make a deal with him."

"Is he a person from this palace?"

When she heard how cautious Cinderella was when she spoke, Lin Sanjiu took a step backward. Lin Sanjiu didn't care if she was seen as a person who judged a book by its cover, but she couldn't bring herself to trust that Old Man Fairy. If she wanted to know why the head steward and that stranger kidnapped Cinderella, couldn't she just ask them herself?

Almost soundless, she moved away quickly and nimbly. In a short time, Lin Sanjiu had turned around the corner and was some distance away from the room. Thus, when she heard the Old Man Fairy speaking again, she didn't catch what he said clearly, "Oh! That's not it, dearie. It's because of the color of his... weird, so he works in the circus entertaining people. He is way more pitiful than you..."

Lin Sanjiu stopped.

[What weird color?]

Her heart raced when a vague thought formed in her mind. Cinderella's slightly surprised voice seemed to ascertain her doubt, "Huh? So there is really a person with a natural beard of that color?"

[Bluebeard! It must be him!]

She heard the Old Man Fairy muttering something like "Wife... a few". Lin Sanjiu suddenly felt enlightened. She felt that she finally found some sort of logic in this pocket dimension. Bluebeard must have made some sort of deal with the Old Man Fairy in this palace where Cinderella was. After that, he became a wealthy man and then married Lila, which leads to that story...

He must have killed Lila and offered the King her mirror. Therefore, in Cinderella's story, something should also affect the future. If she managed to find Bluebeard and kill him, then Lila would be saved! Once Lin Sanjiu came up with this logic, she felt very relieved. The conversation in the room continued when she spotted a flicker of light nearby. She quickly picked up the soldier who was still asleep and hid with him in a corner. Two female attendants walked past her in a single file. One of them was carrying a plate and the other a candlelight. When they stopped at the door, Cinderella's room suddenly became quiet. After a few seconds, Cinderella uncertain voice came out from the room, "Who... who is outside?"

"We were ordered by the head steward to bring your dinner, Miss Ella," one of the attendants replied cordially.

Cinderella's real name was Ella. To mock her, her stepsisters gave her a nickname called Cinderella, which also meant cinder girl. Cinderella sounded emotional when she heard her name after such a long time. She sniffed as she said, "Okay. Thank you."

When they pushed open the door, Lin Sanjiu peeked in and saw that Cinderella was alone. If she looked for Bluebeard now, she might meet the Old Man Fairy. Even if her combat skills had

improved significantly, she did not want to take the risk of fighting against magic. If she was turned into a mouse, it would be too late for any regrets. After considering her options, she decided to target the head steward.

Though the palace wasn't large, it wasn't that easy to search every level and every room. The strange thing about this palace was that every room and hall was draped with black curtains. Though they provided Lin Sanjiu with great hiding spots, they also created a heavy atmosphere in the palace. Following the corridors covered in black, Lin Sanjiu came to one of the palace's side gates.

A stern sounding voice, which Lin Sanjiu had heard once in Cinderella's house, came from behind the two large doors. Although the voice was barely audible, it definitely belonged to the head steward. Lin Sanjiu rendered the guards at the door unconscious and walked softly to the doors. She lifted the curtains and pressed her ears against the door.

"Prince Cedric, we are all sorry for your loss." The head steward voice was deep and sonorous as if he was also in deep sorrow and was controlling his emotions, "But now that the crown prince is dead, the future of our kingdom depends on you..."

"But my brother didn't deserve to die like that!" a young man spoke in a forceful intensity, which broke the heavy silence. It was a voice that would make anyone retreat. After he said that, he seemed to be unable to continue. The head steward quickly comforted him with a few words.

Controlling her impatient nature, Lin Sanjiu waited a little longer. Prince Cedric seemed to regain his composure and spoke again, "Is his coffin ready?"

"It is almost done. We didn't think that the lady would be so petite. The first version was too large so they had to make some adjustments..."

"Aren't you a little over conscientious! The size of such things

don't matter—"

Prince Cedric, with his reddened eyes, had not even finished his sentence when he was interrupted by a sudden clash. Before he could even see what had happened, he had been knocked over by a force. Suddenly, he felt someone grabbing his neck tightly and didn't even have time to cry out in surprise before finding himself unable to even breathe.

It took a few seconds before the head steward realized the sequence of events which unfolded before him. He backed away nervously and pulled out a decorative saber on the wall. Before he shouted, the weird woman who had pounced on the prince warned in a cold voice, "Don't you dare make a sound! If you do, I will strangle him to death."

The head steward nodded, half stunned.

"In your conversation, you said that you were preparing a coffin for a petite woman. Who is she? Is she dead?" Lin Sanjiu used her arms to keep the struggling prince down. He was a tall young man with thin hair. Half his face was covered by bulging veins now, but his stubborn expression showed that he would rather die than let the woman strangling him get her way.

"Please be gentler," the head steward said quite a few time before he held the saber in his hand tighter and replied. "The coffin is for Cinderella!"

Though she had already roughly guessed his answer, Lin Sanjiu's expression changed slightly as she was still shocked by it.

"That woman is a great sinner in our kingdom!" The head steward seemed to have forgotten Prince Cedric, whose face was now fully red, and tears poured down his eyes as if he had remembered something, "Prince Peter, the crown prince who would soon take over the kingdom, spent all his time thinking of

that woman once he met her... He even set off on a journey throughout the kingdom to look for her himself. In the end, in the end, he met with a terrible fate..."

Lin Sanjiu was drawn to what he said and accidentally loosened her grip. Once Cedric felt air gushing to his lungs, he hollered, "My brother traveled in the rain at night just so he could see her sooner. In the end, he was bitten to death by a beast! I will have you buried with him, no matter what!" Cedric face flushed red with fury, accompanied by a slight greenish tinge. The temporary lack of oxygen also caused his eyes to bulge slightly, making him look even more deranged.

[A rainy night... a beast...]

"Give me the full details..." Lin Sanjiu's had a terrible expression on her face as she tightened her grip and Cedric let out a muffled groan. The head steward quickly responded, "Prince Peter saw an injured man at the roadside. He was ambushed when he tried to help the man! There was another disemboweled dead hunter by the side of his corpse..."

[It must be—]

She could finally connect the three stories. Lin Sanjiu thought through her experience. If that was the case, Red Riding Hood's story came first, after that it was Cinderella's story and lastly, it was Lila's...

This was a large development. Lin Sanjiu exhaled and was about to pull her hand back when she happened to spot a familiar furniture.

"I have a second question. Who brought that mirror here?" Lin Sanjiu asked drily. She had no doubt, that was Lila's mirror.

Chapter 141: It Isn't Easy to Kill Three Birds With One Stone

The atmosphere seemed to freeze with silence once she stated that question.

"Well, that is..." the head steward swallowed his saliva nervously. He didn't know why she would suddenly ask about that mirror. "A gentleman who had been recently knighted presented that mirror to the king... It is worth quite a bit but you can take it if you want. Just let the prince go!"

Lin Sanjiu stared motionlessly at the mirror for a few seconds before she let out a long sigh.

"Does that gentleman have a blue beard?" Her tone revealed that she really hoped that it was just a fluke and that the head steward would shake his head.

Unfortunately, a hint of surprise fleeted across the man's face as he wondered why she asked him the question if she already knew the answer. After that, he nodded and said something but Lin Sanjiu couldn't hear his words. This illogical matter had overwhelmed all her thinking capacity. From the previous conversation, the person from the circus who was about to make a deal with the Old Man Fairy was definitely Bluebeard. At the same time, he was also the person who presented the mirror. [If there was so, how could he exist in the past and the future?]

Lin Sanjiu opened her mouth but words failed her. The head steward glued his eyes on her. Lin Sanjiu only remembered that she was strangling someone when she felt the movement of a throat under her hands. She quickly released the prince and leaped aside.

When Prince Cedric could breathe properly again, his face turned as red as a tomato while he curled his body and coughed violent for

some time. Although Lin Sanjiu was still a little bothered by her thoughts, she moved quickly. The moment the saber fell to the ground with a heavy crash, the head steward who was about to shout for backup was struck by a black shadow. He was flung to the wall and fainted after he hit the back of his head against a candle holder.

Prince Cedric glared at Lin Sanjiu with a mix of fear and fury as he watched her pulling back her mouthpart weapon. When he saw what was in her hand, his face turned pale and he froze for a few seconds. He suddenly grabbed his own throat and laughed ruthlessly, "You witch! You demon! Even if you kill me today, you can't save your compatriot..."

Lin Sanjiu was just about to walk out when she stopped. "What do you mean?" She threw a sideways glance at the prince.

"The dinner that was sent to Cinderella has been poisoned," the man's arrogant tone remained unchanged despite being in a dangerous position. "She is probably dead by now!"

[Damn it!]

Even if it had been some time since Prince Cedric uttered those words, Lin Sanjiu could still hear it echoing through her mind. She cursed inwardly as she thrust forward, running as fast as she could. She could only hear the rushing wind filling her ears as she sprinted through the corridors and towards Cinderella's room.

She probably knocked down more than a dozen female attendants as she ran. She couldn't care less about the noisy commotion she had stirred up behind her. She came to Cinderella's door and kicked down the door. At the same moment, she saw that Cinderella was about to place a spoon of salad into her mouth.

"Don't eat—"

Before Lin Sanjiu could spit out her full warning, she felt herself

lose balance and she fell into... a patch of flower field. Her confusion only lasted half a second this round; Lin Sanjiu rolled to her side and stood up quickly.

The sun hung in the azure sky as the flower field basked in the glorious sunshine. There was a scent of fresh grass all around. Lin Sanjiu had a feeling that she was back at the start, the place where she first met Red Riding Hood. She saw the same forest, the flower field and the clouds in the far distance. The only thing that was different was the stone tablet before her.

Her heart suddenly pounded rapidly and adrenaline coursed through her body. Lin Sanjiu bit hard on her lips. She surveyed her surroundings and slowly walked to the stone tablet. She read the words on the newly added stone tablet:

"No. 72 Pocket Dimension Quest:

"The main character of the three stories are now in grave danger. You can only execute one action within this pocket dimension to save the lives of these three characters.

"To better specify the definition of this "one action", you will be given five execution points. If the action you plan to take exceeds five points, it exceeds the definition of "one action", therefore you wouldn't be able to execute it.

"If you do not execute that one action within 30 minutes, you will automatically fail the quest. The countdown started the moment you saw this stone tablet.

"PS: Trust me, you definitely want to keep them alive. You can only cross this stone tablet if you save all three main characters."

The stone tablet ended with that ambiguous sentence. Lin Sanjiu was slightly perplexed by this until she spotted the small words on top of the stone tablet and instantly understood what the line "cross the stone tablet" meant.

[Boundary Line]

This stone tablet is a boundary line between this pocket dimension and the beautiful Garden of Eden.

Lin Sanjiu couldn't resist tilting her head to look at the scenery behind the stone tablet—well, she was still in the same flower field. Lin Sanjiu saw an unusually tall daisy among a bunch of daisies nearby which grew past the boundary but still appeared normal. She took a significant effort to curb the impulse to just walk over the stone tablet. She sat down and just stared at a patch of grass not far away. Her brows slowly furrowed together.

Apparently, she was the 72nd person to enter this particular pocket dimension. [The quests were probably different for every single person who entered, thus the numbering...] Lin Sanjiu didn't care if the previous people who had entered this pocket dimension were now dead or still alive. She was engrossed in her thoughts as she sat and forced herself to remember every single detail since she stepped into this pocket dimension.

Lin Sanjiu actually had a hunch about the matter regarding saving the main characters much earlier. Since she was sent away at the very critical moment when the characters were in danger, it was just logically... But, she did not expect that there would be such a restriction.

[What is the one thing I can do to save all three people? No. What if it's something like a domino effect. If one thing happens, it will set off a chain of events that would alter the future...] Just when Lin Sanjiu thought that she saw the crux of the issue, she remembered how there were two Bluebeards existing at the same time in Cinderella's palace and was stuck again.

When Lin Sanjiu thought about the fact that she already spent five minutes of her 30-minute limit, she started feeling impatient. She took a pebble on the ground and tried to throw it far away from her. Unexpected, the pebble was stuck to her hand. When she looked down at the pebble, a line of words appeared on it: "Throw a pebble, 5 execution points. Proceed?"

Lin Sanjiu was aghast as she quickly yelled, "No. Don't proceed! Cancel! I don't want to do that!" The pebble fell off her hand and into the grass.

[That was close.] Lin Sanjiu wiped the cold sweat off her forehead. She stood up slowly and carefully. After that, she cautiously took one step forward. [If taking one step costs execution points, I might as well give up on this.]

Luckily, no words appeared anywhere. "So, if I don't interact with anything or anyone in the pocket dimension, I can go wherever I want?" With some confidence in her inference, she walked forward a few more steps. Sure enough, nothing happened.

[If I can go wherever I want, this should be much easier.] In the meantime, Lin Sanjiu did not know what to do so she decided to check out her surroundings. She wanted to know which story she was in right now, at least.

As a growth-type, she could sense that her body was gradually growing stronger. Running at full speed, Lin Sanjiu took less than a minute to reach a very small provincial town. The most conspicuous landmark in the town was a building with a weather vane. The brightly colored rooster at the top of the building was pointing west, wavering every now and then with the wind.

This wasn't Cinderella's town...

Lin Sanjiu walked and observed her surroundings while she carefully avoided touching anything. This wasn't that easy as she seemed invisible to all the people around. They treated her like air and constantly headed in her direction. Two kids ran towards her as they teased each other, Lin Sanjiu barely dodged them but they didn't seem to notice anything, instead they shouted, "I heard those people are all very beautiful!" Then, they ran away.

Lin Sanjiu watched them for a few seconds and suddenly had an idea. She chased after them. Perhaps it was luck, or already pre-arranged by the pocket dimension, but she spotted Emma. This

Emma, with her beautiful sharp chin, was around nineteen years old, so Lin Sanjiu almost didn't recognize her.

"Please accept me. I can learn really fast." Instead of the mature, elegant, streetwise eyes that Lin Sanjiu knew, Emma's bright eyes were now filled with fear. "If I don't have this job, my daughter and I won't survive..."

A dance troupe heading to the palace for a performance had stopped for a day in this little town and was staying in the building with the weather vane, ready to set off the next day. When this news erupted in the little town, Emma quickly approached them to seek an opportunity. The leader of the dance troupe was a very picky middle-aged lady. She circled Emma and examined her carefully. She didn't see anything which displeased her so she asked, "What about your daughter?"

Lin Sanjiu was standing in the middle of the room, but neither women gave her even a glance.

"I could get my aunt to take care of her." Emma lowered her head as if to hide her conflicted expression, "If I send her the money I earn, my aunt would definitely take good care of her..." Lin Sanjiu crossed her arms as she listened to their conversation but was suddenly struck by a thought. If she stopped Emma from joining the dance troupe now, she would have to live with her daughter and wouldn't become an erotic dancer. Therefore, she would stay with her granddaughter Red Riding Hood in the future. If they were staying together, they wouldn't meet any werewolves, which meant Red Riding Hood would survive.

Without Emma, the hunters wouldn't surround the cottage. The werewolf wouldn't have the chance to hide among the hunters, wouldn't be able to ambush the prince, and Cinderella would be saved!

Her rush of excitement suddenly faded because she really couldn't think how stopping Emma would help Lila. Lila would

still die. With this slight delay, the leader of the troupe had already agreed for Emma to join them. Emma beamed as she left the building. Lin Sanjiu sighed quietly and hurried behind her, squeezing out of the door with her.

Lin Sanjiu was like a ghost now and that was fairly inconvenient. She couldn't even touch the door as she was afraid that doing anything would use up those five execution points. Because she had to avoid touching the door, her view was blocked when she squeezed through the gap between the door, despite her superhuman reflexes. Without any time to dodge, a little figure knocked onto her calf. Lin Sanjiu quickly steadied herself and saw the words on a brick. "Knock down young Bluebeard, five execution points. Proceed?"

Chapter 142: The Messy Timeline

At this time, Bluebeard was only about eight. His small average-looking face was clean and he didn't have a single strand of blue whiskers on his face. But, on closer inspection, she realized that the root of his hair was a little blue. After Lin Sanjiu canceled the option, Bluebeard staggered and fell to the ground. "This shouldn't count right?" Lin Sanjiu mumbled softly and only let out a sigh of relief when the words disappeared from the grainy surface of the brick.

Gloomy-looking Bluebeard got up from the ground without making a sound. He rolled his eyes and slid into another small alley without saying anything. Lin Sanjiu followed him immediately, without thinking. As she followed him, she scanned her surroundings. Once she started following Bluebeard, the previous buildings around slowly faded into the background and disappeared into thin air, like a soaked watercolor painting. After a cool breeze blew past them, she saw a small village shrouded in mist. In contrast to the town, the village appeared run-down and stricken with poverty. She didn't see anyone else even after walking for quite some time. However, Bluebeard, who lived there, seemed comfortable with the environment. It was as if he didn't even notice that their surroundings had changed. He walked briskly, stirring up quite a lot of dust.

[If I kill him here, Lila wouldn't die in the future—] This tempting thought suddenly flashed in her mind and echoed in her ears. If she thought about it carefully, Bluebeard's story was special and different from the two other stories. He was the only one who could exist in a state of past and future in a single point in time. There was also some sort of connection between his story and Cinderella's... If she killed him, it might change something. However, she couldn't link his story to Red Riding Hood's. In the end, Lin Sanjiu decided against that.

Lin Sanjiu followed behind Bluebeard for some time and estimated that more than ten minutes had already passed. She couldn't help feeling anxious. Bluebeard's father was an alcoholic and his mother was abusive. Neither of them showed a single shred of concern for their ugly son. After watching for awhile, Lin Sanjiu realized that Bluebeard had a pitiful childhood, considering the environment he was raised in. However, Lin Sanjiu still had no clue what she should do even after some time.

Unfortunately, time waits for no one. The sun which hung on the horizon like a yellow boiled egg yolk disappeared past the hills in a distance before she even noticed. Lin Sanjiu guessed that at least twenty minutes had passed since she saw the stone tablet. After, Bluebeard muttered something quickly to himself as he sat by the river. His eyes remained very still and if Lin Sanjiu didn't see him breathing, she would have thought he died.

"So he was weird even when young..." Lin Sanjiu said to herself. She couldn't wait any longer but everything around was totally foreign to her so she didn't know where to go even if she wanted to leave. Just when she was stuck in this dilemma, she heard a bubbling sound coming from the river. Suddenly, a wet human head surfaced from the water...

"Are you the little chap looking for me?" The person who rose from the water wiped the water droplets off his face and flung back his clumps of gray-white hair to the back. He revealed a long wrinkly, wart-covered old face.

Lin Sanjiu stared blankly at the Old Man Fairy. She unconsciously made her breathing lighter, afraid to miss out on a single word. By the looks of it, Bluebeard was also surprised that the fairy summoning incarnation he accidentally stumbled upon really worked. He stammered and told the fairy his wish in a haphazard manner. The Old Man Fairy chuckled twice and didn't reply but instead looked behind the boy.

Lin Sanjiu did not know if she was delusional, but she felt that

the Old Man Fairy gave her a glance.

"If you wish to be incredibly rich, I could make a deal with you, dearie," the old man said with his crafty and hoarse voice. "But it is too early now. You will have to wait for your 25th birthday, I will definitely look for you then..."

Bluebeard wanted to say something quickly but the Old Man Fairy raised his hand and stopped him, "Eighteen years pass quicker than you think... Okay, I still have to go to another pitiful little lady's house to make a deal. She lost her biological mother and fell into a sorry state..."

[Cinderella?] This was the first name that came to Lin Sanjiu. [But, the timeline doesn't fit? If Emma and Bluebeard's age made it probable for them to exist in the same time, how could Cinderella, who was only older than Red Riding Hood by ten years or so, be a teenager at this point in time? Is he talking about someone else?]

Lin Sanjiu had never known herself to be that intelligent, so her mind was just in a confused mess. The Old Man Fairy got out from the river, shook his fly-like wings and stretched them, flying away into the distance. With no time to think, Lin Sanjiu just followed the man.

It was really quite strange to chase after a fairy.

No matter how fast she ran, she occasionally lost sight of him. That hunched back often disappeared from mid-air and reappeared in another direction before she could react. His body glowed slightly but it wasn't that obvious, it was only visible because it would be night time soon. Lin Sanjiu was quite afraid that she would lose her way.

Thankfully, after running for a short while, the old man who flew carefreely in front of her suddenly stopped. He changed his direction and flew down toward the garden at the back of a mansion. Without taking a second look, Lin Sanjiu was sure that it was Cinderella's house. Cinderella was kneeling on the ground

with her skinny frame and was grabbing her own arms, sobbing. She looked just like the last time Lin Sanjiu saw her, around sixteen, and had a head of golden hair.

For a second, Lin Sanjiu only felt shocked and baffled. She really couldn't make sense of anything. [Is the timeline in this pocket dimension just a jumbled mess? If that was so, how could she figure out what is the "one action" which would change everything?] She stared mindlessly at the two people in the garden. Though she did not take her eyes off them, her mind was in complete disarray. She only got her focus back when she heard Cinderella's slightly raised voice, "I don't understand what you mean. I don't know what you mean when you say I have to pay a price..."

The old man gave a helpless expression, as if he had a headache, "Ah, ah, ah... Well, it is just something like digging some holes along a road. Come. Just sign here and agree to my conditions. I will send you to the ball right now..."

[Digging holes?] That was one more mind-boggling question for Lin Sanjiu. She watched Cinderella, who was partially numbed by all these but still anxious.

Cinderella bit on the pen with some hesitation. She looked at the sheepskin parchment which was almost one meter in length and quickly dismissed the thought of reading through the entire thing. When she heard the word "ball" she clenched her teeth and signed her name on the line that the old man was pointing to. The Old Man Fairy laughed out happily. He shook his hand and the contract disappeared into countless dots of light which entered his bracelet.

[That sheepskin parchment was a special item!] Lin Sanjiu's mind raced. She was way too familiar with that. Even though she didn't know what magic was supposed to look like, she had seen so many special items and those small dots of lights definitely meant that the parchment was a special item!

"Hahaha! That's great, dearie!" The old man laughed loudly as he waved his hands and a wand appeared in them. There was a flash of golden light and Cinderella's hair was quickly bundled into a beautiful bun with a gem-studded hair accessory. A beautiful necklace hung from her neck over her dazzling dress.

If Lin Sanjiu launched a sneak attack at that right moment, she might get that sheepskin parchment and even stop Cinderella from going to the ball. If Cinderella couldn't go to the ball, the prince could die a thousand times and the royal family would not look for her... However, it seemed impossible to save all three people.

The pumpkin carriage pulled out from the garden, rumbling, and Lin Sanjiu leaped and landed on top of it. In her moment of hesitation, she lost sight of the Old Man Fairy. The only people left were Cinderella and that horse which had turned into a footman. The howling wind blew Lin Sanjiu's hair to the back of her ears. She sat on the top of the carriage, feeling at a loss of what to do next. She didn't know how much time she had left. The palace ball was a great event as it was opened to the entire kingdom. Many lavish carriages headed in the same direction, converging toward the road to the palace. Cinderella pulled the curtains aside and looked outside, and asked her footman, "Who are the people in those carriages? They look different."

Lin Sanjiu looked up and realized that she could recognize those people.

"That is the dance troupe that would be performing for the king... Miss Cinderella," the footman replied politely. "Other than the dance troupe, do you see those carriages? The best circus in the kingdom would also be performing in the palace!"

Lin Sanjiu was stunned. She looked over and saw a colorful troop of carriages nearby. There was even a sign on one of the carriages which wrote, "Come see the extraordinary man with a natural blue beard! It's magical!" The sign was shaped like a splatter of butter and gradually disappeared from her sight into the darkness and the

carriage pulled further and further away from her.

Like an old computer processor, Lin Sanjiu's brain finally crashed and she could no longer process anything. [What should I do next?] Lin Sanjiu laughed wryly. Just then, she suddenly saw something blinking at the corner of her eyes.

She looked down and she noticed a line of words which had appeared on the roof of the carriage at some unknown time.

"Countdown: You have only 59 seconds remaining of your 30 minutes limit."

She had to execute an action within this 59 seconds to save all three people...

Chapter 143: So That Was You

Lin Sanjiu found herself in absolute darkness and she couldn't see a thing. The forward momentum of her body was too strong for her to stop herself and she finally knocked onto something hard, hurting her rib cage in the process. "Sss" she hissed in pain. Ignoring the pain, she felt around and touched something. It had a smooth surface and seemed to be some sort of handrail. She felt as if she was blindfolded while she walked blindly in the total darkness. When her heartbeat and her breathing finally relaxed, she was finally hit by the pungent smell of mildew and the dust in the air. It seemed like no one had been here in years so the air had probably been sealed for quite some time. Yet, this stench was like a god-sent gift.

She exhaled deeply and sat on the first step of a flight of stairs. She sighed, "I'm out." Honestly speaking, she didn't know how she managed to get out of the pocket dimension and even what she did just now. When there was only 40 seconds left, Lin Sanjiu really thought that her journey would end right there in that fairytale pocket dimension. She had too little time, but even if she was given a week, she didn't have the confidence to unravel the mysteries.

Three carriages from three different directions were all heading for the palace. If the carriages didn't reach the palace, perhaps everything would be solved. Emma wouldn't enter the palace, so she might return to her daughter. Bluebeard wouldn't enter the palace, so he might not meet with the Old Man Fairy. Needless to say, Cinderella would also be saved. It might just have been Lin Sanjiu's wishful thinking, and the stories may develop in other ways—for example, Emma might become an erotic dancer in another place; the Old Man Fairy might take the initiative to look for Bluebeard; Cinderella might meet the prince two days later,

etc. and so the characters may end up dying—but that was the best idea Lin Sanjiu could think of.

She mustered her strength and jumped off from the top of the pumpkin carriage. With a few leaps and bounds, with the remnant sensation of standing on the carriage still in her feet, she had sped far ahead of the carriages in the direction of the palace. Her plan was to destroy the only path to the palace. Even though it was a crazy big action, she thought that it should be considered as "one action". Lin Sanjiu activated her [Mosaic Censorship] and jumped up onto the tall statue of the king which was positioned right at the gates of the palace. She gathered all her focus on her hands and leaped down from the top of the statue, with her hands facing the ground.

She was at the gathering area outside the palace, which was designated for parking carriages. If she destroyed that place, the carriages that hadn't reached the palace would be stuck outside—

"Destroy this road, 5 execution points. Proceed?"

While Lin Sanjiu kept the downward momentum, she shouted, "Yes!" The next second, her two fists struck the ground with an enormous impact, breaking the ground before the words even fully disappeared.

The impact was much larger than Lin Sanjiu expected but she didn't know if it was because she had confirmed her action in the pocket dimension. Boom! A rain of broken cobblestone fell from the sky with Lin Sanjiu right in the epicenter of the eruption. They struck the ground creating multiple deep holes. There was a large hole in the middle of the road and a large fissure started to appear on the ground very quickly.

Lin Sanjiu squinted her eyes as she stood in the middle of a great cloud of stone, dust and smoke. She tried to look out for the forthcoming carriages. However, she suddenly felt her body go cold. Because... past the cloud of destruction, she realized that it

was once again a cool afternoon.

It wasn't night time yet and she didn't see the decorations from the ball. Cinderella's and Bluebeard's carriage had disappeared. Lin Sanjiu stared blankly as a large stone also half the size of a person crashed down onto a carriage. It destroyed the entire frame of the carriage instantly and it broke into pieces. This was followed by the sharp cries of a few women. That carriage, which belonged to the dance troupe, wasn't the only that was damaged. The drivers of a few carriages couldn't react fast enough, so their carriages had overturned to the side of the road with their horses. The air was suddenly filled with the fearful cries from the people and the sound of the agitated horses neighing.

The countdown had already ended long ago, but Lin Sanjiu was still in the pocket dimension. The road had been destroyed but other than injuring the members from the dance troupe, it seemed useless. Lin Sanjiu felt her body go cold. Instead of stepping forward, she tumbled to the ground. Lin Sanjiu did not expect that Cinderella and Bluebeard would be 'transported' away just like her previous experiences.

She stuck her fingers into her hair as she looked expressionless in the direction of the dance troupe. She couldn't even feel an ounce of strength. If she failed the quest in the pocket dimension, what would happen to her?

"Ah, ah! Please be gentle. My leg. My leg."

Lin Sanjiu heard a familiar voice sobbing out. She turned and saw a few soldiers from the palace working together to rescue the people who were trapped under the broken carriage. The person who was sobbing was none other than Emma.

"It's alright. You just fractured your leg. You will be fine after some time," a soldier who had a blushing face consoled her softly, but he didn't dare to look directly at Emma's face.

"No, I have to dance, I need to dance..." Emma wiped her tears as

she continued whimpering by the road side. As her leg had been struck by a piece of large rock, blood poured from her wound, creating a large blood stain on her dress.

[I'm a person that is going to die soon, yet I still implicated Emma...] Lin Sanjiu sighed. She couldn't help feeling guilty about her action.

"You can't dance like this..." The soldier who had helped Emma came over again when he was less busy. He handed Emma a handkerchief, "Why don't you use this to clean your face first..."

Lin Sanjiu felt her vision blurring. Somehow, Lin Sanjiu felt her eyes welling up with tears. She really didn't want to die just like that... But before she finished her track of thoughts, her body suddenly felt very light. It was as though someone had pulled her up by her feet and tossed her into the air. As the scenery turned upside down and the world around disappeared into a spiral. She suddenly blacked out. The last thing she saw was the gray stone tablet and then she found herself in total darkness.

After she hit the handrail, it took quite some time before Lin Sanjiu realized something: she was back. She was back in the black tower. [But, what actually happened? Emma was hurt, so she couldn't dance. Following that logical track, I probably saved only Red Riding Hood and Cinderella.] Lin Sanjiu froze for a few seconds as the confusion from the pocket dimension slowly sunk to the back of her mind. She was once again faced with the cold reality. [I am out of there and that's all that matters!] Being in the pocket dimension had definitely delayed her plans. She didn't know how much time had actually passed outside. Maybe, everyone else was still fighting. For Lin Sanjiu, her priority was to look for the power source in this black tower so that she could destroy the glass globe!

Feeling her legs grow weak, Lin Sanjiu wiped the tears from her face and drew out her [Ability Polishing Agent]. A silver light instantly gushed out like water, filling up the surrounding space.

The large door where she entered through was still sitting silently in place. Just as she expected, the space within the black tower was very small. The area was not more than ten square meters. The flight of stairs she was now sitting at took up quite a large amount of that space and crawled upward in a spiral.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know how tall the black tower was, but the spiral staircase seemed to reach the top. [After escaping the pocket dimension on the first story, there shouldn't be any more dangerous traps, right?] Lin Sanjiu held her [Ability Polishing Agent] and climbed up the staircase cautiously.

She could only hear her own breathing and footsteps as she climbed up the quiet black tower. After being surrounded by this still silence for too long, Lin Sanjiu's heart skipped a beat when she suddenly heard an ear-piercing sound of the doorbell resonating through the tower. For a moment, she thought she had misheard that sound—

However, the doorbell continued ringing. "Ding dong. Ding dong." It rang for a few times, totally annihilating the silent atmosphere. Lin Sanjiu aimed the light toward the door and her heart thumped violently. She had already stealthily activated her [Mosaic Censorship].

The large door opened with a loud rumble, just like when she first entered. When the door opened, the light from outdoors leaked in. Lin Sanjiu subconsciously felt a sense of relief. There was only a dim light coming in from the door, so it was probably still deep in the night.

The person who walked in seemed surprised to be greeted by a bright light. The person paused and called out, "Miss Lin?"

Lin Sanjiu sighed in relief and put down her hand. She let out an exhausted chuckle and replied, "It's you."

Chapter 144: The Reveal

"So... you're saying that Xueqin noticed that something was wrong anyway?" Lin Sanjiu said with some awkwardness as she took a large step, climbing the stairs two at a time.

"Yeah! She started grumbling about it midway to our destination. She would definitely come here herself if she didn't need Bai Xiaoke to help her move." Li Tao was short so she had to move much faster to match Lin Sanjiu's speed. Her bright, puppy-like raven eyes showed a light-hearted cheerfulness, "She actually wanted me to look for you and then use whatever means to bring you back."

"Huh!" Lin Sanjiu was reassured when she found out that the operation outside had only been ongoing for less than an hour. She couldn't help finding Xueqin, who was at the other side of the city, rather amusing. She used her [Ability Polishing Agent] to light the next few steps ahead and continued, "I have been through all those dangers she warned about. It is just a pocket dimension. Look, we have already climbed so many stories, and we're still fine."

Lin Sanjiu was a bit wrong about her description, as the black tower technically only had two stories, the ground floor, and the top floor. The middle portion of the tower was just an almost endless flight of stairs. Naturally, if the power source was really located in the black tower, it could only be on the top floor. Both women had already climbed up four to five segments of the spiral staircase but they were still unable to see the top floor.

"By the way, what was the pocket dimension like? How did you escape?"

Lin Sanjiu wasn't quite sure how to answer Li Tao. She hemmed and hawed before she turned to look at Li Tao and suddenly smiled, "Actually, I don't know... Why don't I tell you what happened? Maybe, you might unravel what have transpired. Two

heads are better than one!"

After that, she recounted her experience in the pocket dimension, providing Li Tao with as many details as she could. As the storylines and timelines within the fairytale-themed pocket dimension were in such a mess, Lin Sanjiu found it hard to even put it in words. Unbelievably, Li Tao actually understood her confusing narration.

"I think I escaped because of dumb luck. No matter how hard I think, I can't make sense of that pocket dimension..." Lin Sanjiu confessed her perplexity under the glimmering silver light and their steady footsteps.

Li Tao remained quiet for a while. She seemed to be stumped as well. As Lin Sanjiu focused the light ahead, she couldn't see Li Tao's expression. After some time, she finally spoke softly, "It's quite interesting that the age of the three main characters contradicts their existence on the same timeline..."

"What are your thoughts?" Lin Sanjiu asked inquisitively.

They were still quite a distance away from the top of the tower. To be on the safe side, Lin Sanjiu didn't use her maximum speed to race up the tower. Right now, she was more than willing to hear Li Tao's analysis. Li Tao slowed down her steps subconsciously and laughed a little hesitantly, "This is just my thoughts, I don't know if it's right."

"It's alright. Just speak your mind."

"I think that it is fundamentally wrong to use the assumption that past events affect future events," Li Tao already caught Lin Sanjiu's attention with her first sentence, "I think that all three stories were actually independent, and have nothing to do with each other."

"Huh? How do you explain the prince's death and Lila's mirror?"

Li Tao seemed to realize that it might be quite difficult for her to

express her explanation. After thinking for a bit, she asked, "Do you have a piece of paper?"

Lin Sanjiu stopped and looked through her deck of cards. Most of the items she had were things salvaged from Hyperthermal Hell and not many paper-made products could survive the high temperature in that world. In the end, she tore a piece of toilet paper and handed it to Li Tao.

"I need three pieces," Li Tao replied.

Lin Sanjiu froze for a moment, feeling as if she almost sensed something but failed to understand anything in the end. She tore off another two more pieces of toilet paper and changed the toilet roll back into a card. After that, she packed and prepared to store her cards. Suddenly, she noticed her Diary Card.

"Ah, isn't that my super-cute girl!" A single line appeared on the card.

Before Li Tao noticed the disgraceful card, Lin Sanjiu quickly stored it into her body. Next, she watched Li Tao as if nothing had happened. Li Tao held two pieces of toilet paper in her left hand thoughtfully and used her right hand to place the final piece beneath both of them.

Now, the three toilet paper created a model with a top, middle and bottom level.

"Each of this pieces of paper represents a story." Li Tao cleared her throat and spoke excitedly as though she enjoyed this process of revealing this mystery, "They are supposed to be on parallel planes so they can't interfere with each other and they each have their individual time streams."

"The story which covers the longest time frame, and also the story with the fastest flow of time, is Bluebeard's story," as she said this, she took the top-most piece of paper and embossed a short line on the paper followed by a dot using her fingernails, she then

repeated this a few more times." Bluebeard met the fairy when he was 7 and only married Lila when he was almost 40, there are almost 30 years in between.

Lin Sanjiu nodded her head to show that she understood that point.

"Next, it is Red Riding Hood's story," Li Tao drew slightly long lines and added fewer dots. "There is about twenty years from Emma's past to when Red Riding Hood appears."

"So, the story with the slowest flow of time must be Cinderella's story?" Lin Sanjiu couldn't help adding.

"That's right. When the two stories... Um, you can just look at these two toilet paper... move forward about ten over years, only a few months would have passed in Cinderella's timeline." After she said that, Li Tao drew a very long line a dot and another long line. The length of the paper only allowed two long lines to be drawn.

She stacked the three pieces of paper together once again. But this time around, she took a hairpin from her hair and aimed at the paper using the sharp end of her hairpin.

"Now, I am the Old Man Fairy. I deceived Cinderella and got her approval to create a few holes in her layer of paper."

Lin Sanjiu faintly grasped the concept that Li Tao was trying to show her and felt the hair on her back standing.

"This dot represents the segment of time when the prince was looking for Cinderella," Li Tao used her hairpin and perforate the dot on the bottom piece of paper. She reached the second layer and moved it towards another dot, "It coincides with the time when Red Riding Hood meets the werewolf.

"Now, the microorganisms on the surface of the toilet paper 'leaks' into the second layer when the holes are created. You could say that the 'werewolf' germ had now contaminated the Cinderella paper or the 'prince' germ is now on the Little Red Riding Hood

paper. Thus, the characters and scenarios on two different timelines are blended at these points."

"So I am also a... germ which can travel between the three pieces of paper." Lin Sanjiu stared at the toilet paper and laughed wryly as the holes created were not aligned, and the papers were a little twisted. Under the dim silver light, they seemed to possess their own little lives.

Li Tao nodded with a serious expression, "As shown, you saw the weird occurrences due to the multiple holes within the layers. For example, Bluebeard of the past and future can exist in the palace at the same time."

Li Tao pulled a single strand of hair from her head and poke her hair through two dots that were far apart from each other. She then pulled the two ends of her hair together and pull them through the single hole on Cinderella's paper. When she pulled her hair together, Bluebeard's paper immediately crumpled together so that they converged at a single point.

"That was why the old man told Bluebeard that eighteen years are much shorter than you think!" Lin Sanjiu muttered half-stunned and half in awe.

Li Tao smiled faintly, "That's right. Once you realized the essence that the stories exist on three different layers, you will know that there is a single action that can guarantee the survival of all main characters. As you are just an outsider, you cannot create holes in each layer like the Old Man Fairy. On top of that, some of the 'intersections', let's call it that, might not connect all three layers.

"You mean the pocket dimension lied?"

"No, that stone tablet didn't lie." Li Tao waved her hand. She squished the three pieces of paper into a ball and threw it aside. "You could say that there was a red herring."

"A red herring?" Lin Sanjiu parroted as she followed behind Li

Tao, climbing up the steps slowly.

"It's simple. If Red Riding Hood is the main character of the Red Riding Hood story and Cinderella is the main character in Cinderella, then what makes you think Lila is the main character in Bluebeard's story?"

Li Tao's gentle, subtle voice rang out softly in the darkness like a gentle tide upon the walls of the tower—ironically, the meaning of the words were like explosives to Lin Sanjiu.

"Because..." Lin Sanjiu wanted to say something but she was stuck because she didn't know why she assumed that Lila was the main character.

"Shouldn't Bluebeard be the main character in the story of Bluebeard?" Li Tao chuckled.

"But, the stone tablet mentioned that all three characters were in grave danger so I have to save them. At that point, when Lila saw Bluebeard, she was in danger—"

"So, what did you plan to do then?" Li Tao turned to look at her, with the dim silver light around them.

"I decided to kill Bluebeard." Lin Sanjiu replied mindlessly. She understood now.

With that being said, things were now very clear for Lin Sanjiu. If Lin Sanjiu didn't kill Bluebeard, it automatically counted as her saving him. However, no one directly involved in that moment would have thought of that.

"You can say that the entire pocket dimension is a trap but it is useless against you," Li Tao laughed quietly. "Other people wouldn't leave Bluebeard to his own devices if they considered the situation. After all, he seems like the most suspicious person. Once a person decided on this, it would be difficult to make a different choice. However, for a person like you who uses her muscles before her brain, it is apparently easier for you to efficiently solve the

puzzle."

Lin Sanjiu really couldn't decide if Li Tao was praising or mocking her. After a while, she commented softly, "No, if it was you, you would quickly see through the trick. You are really good, you managed to analyze the situation by just hearing what I said..."

Li Tao quickly felt a little embarrassed and answered, "Huh? Nah, it is just that I can see it a little clearer as an observer... If I really entered that pocket dimension, I might not be able to escape."

"I have another two questions for you." Lin Sanjiu suddenly said.

"What are they?"

"Firstly, when you first escaped the pocket dimension in this black tower, what was it like?" Lin Sanjiu didn't use a demanding attitude but said that casually.

Li Tao who was ahead of her suddenly stopped. She stood still in the darkness and did not turn around.

"For my second question... Your name is not Li Tao. Who are you?"

Chapter 145: What Are You Planning?

While they chatted, both women were already more than halfway to the top of the tower. If Lin Sanjiu looked down from where she stood, she could only see a murky darkness below her. The silver light from her [Ability Polishing Agent] could only reach the handrails of the segment of staircase one story beneath and darkness swallowed anything beyond that. Being close to 200 meters above the ground, Lin Sanjiu felt her palms getting sweaty when she looked downward, even though she couldn't really see anything clearly. She quickly looked away and wondered why she never realized in the past that she was a little acrophobic.

She looked at the silhouette in front of her and then at the remaining stairs leading upward. The top floor was about ten stories above them and they would be reaching it soon.

"Ah..." Li Tao—or rather the woman who called herself Li Tao—suddenly raised her head and let out a long sigh. She stroked her own hair and said, "Really." She turned to her side under the dimly lit space, showing her very slim side silhouette.

"Is this what you call a 'beast-like instinct'?" she cocked her head asking. Lin Sanjiu could not see her expression in the darkness, she could only see the woman's black, shiny eyes. "How could you see through my performance if you can't even understand that pocket dimension?"

"Who are you?" Lin Sanjiu said icily with a monotonous tone.

Li Tao smiled unexpectedly and ignored both Lin Sanjiu's question and animosity. Li Tao continued up the staircase, one step at a time, minding her own business. She seemed totally unconcerned that Lin Sanjiu might just spring a surprise attack from behind. She stopped only when she reached the next turning point on the spiral staircase. She lowered her head and looked down at Lin Sanjiu. Her previous lively, lighthearted persona,

which was akin to a small animal, faded gradually from her face just like melted snow. It was replaced by the aura of a calm and mature woman.

"Say, how did I expose my identity?" she asked gently, enunciating each word clearly.

Lin Sanjiu knew that if she wanted to reach the top of the tower, she had no choice but to go through 'Li Tao'. She took a deep breath and continued climbing the stairs.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" While she noticed 'Li Tao's' slightly surprised expression, Lin Sanjiu tightened her muscles and forced a relaxed smile, "If you also want to head to the top of the tower, why don't you come along. Let's talk along the way."

'Li Tao' was stunned for a moment and finally uttered softly, "Ballsy."

Lin Sanjiu smiled faintly, but she walked cautiously close to the wall. When she saw 'Li Tao' slowly climbing up the stairs again, she explained slowly, "If I didn't have my Diary Card, I wouldn't be suspicious of you."

"Oh? You mean the card you told me to stick on Gong Daoyi?"

"Yes." Lin Sanjiu replied as she narrowed her eyes and looked at the woman nearby, who was still ahead of her. The woman seemed relaxed and unguarded and Lin Sanjiu couldn't really understand why. "One of the features of my Diary Card is that it will address the people I know by their names. Yet, though I know you, the Diary Card just referred to you as 'super-cute girl'.

If it was once or twice, I would have accepted that it is due to the crappy personality of the card. However, when I was bathing, I already had a very slight suspicion about it because my Diary Card did not refer to you as 'Li Tao' even once."

"But seriously, your card is a little..."

"Unreliable, right?" Lin Sanjiu finished her sentence, "Since I've never seen it do that, I really couldn't be sure. But when you said, 'If I entered that pocket dimension', I suddenly realized that there was a problem... Why weren't you sucked into the pocket dimension when you entered the black tower?" Lin Sanjiu asked rhetorically while she stared at Li Tao's back. Anyone else would think that once they broke out of the pocket dimension, the next person who entered the tower would not face the same problem. However, Lin Sanjiu remembered a small detail. She remembered the words "No. 72 Pocket Dimension Quest". That is to say, every person that entered that pocket dimension should confront a different situation. Even if the fairytale scenario had been solved, the pocket dimension still existed and Li Tao should have been sucked into a different scenario. But that didn't happen. From the time she walked through the door till now, nothing had happened to her. That would only mean that Li Tao had already escaped that pocket dimension once.

"I see." Li Tao sighed but seemed unaffected. "I was a little perplexed when I found out that your experiences in that pocket dimension were different from mine... I admit I am too engrossed with the three timelines, I missed this detail."

Lin Sanjiu didn't say a word.

That wasn't the only reason. When she looked into Bluebeard's room, the person she saw was Li Tao. Recalling that image, the aura of the person in the illusion was closer to the latter's current persona than her previous pretense.

"What are you planning?"

When Lin Sanjiu said that, she probably wouldn't know that the Aliba, the Chief of Police, asked the same question at the same time while he was far away in his own abode. When Aliba woke up from his dream, the woman beside him was still fast asleep. Even after a while, he still felt groggy as if his mind was still tethering between his dream and reality. He didn't know what woke him up. He only

noticed the shadow of a person sitting at the end of his bed when he sat up to grab a glass of water. The person was watching him with folded arms and he didn't know how long that man had been sitting in the dark.

Not fully awake, Aliba froze for half a second. The green led digits on his clock skipped, showing "01:26".

"Hi," the voice from the black shadow was like a refreshing spring, lithe and even with a tinge of humor, "Good evening."

[There is a gun in the bedside drawer.] Just as this thought flashed in Aliba's mind, he suddenly heard a 'click' sound from the man's hand. A few pieces of black metal parts dropped from the man's hand onto the carpeted floor, creating a muffled noise. Aliba knew that he certainly couldn't dismantle a gun that fast.

"Gong... Gong Daoyi?" Aliba asked quietly, he tried his best to keep his voice calm as he controlled his suddenly palpitating heart. "I advise you to leave now. If I activate the alarm, this place will be securely surrounded within ten seconds."

"But, I only need three seconds to kill you."

The person leaned forward slowly. The moonlight from the window lit his sharp jawline and beautiful face. His fair skin contrasted with his black hair which covered half his raven eyes. It was indeed Gong Daoyi.

Aliba did not doubt his words in the slightest. Not just anyone could enter the smuggling business. Other normal posthumans could barely survive 14 months, let alone engage in such operations. On top of that, he knew that Gong Daoyi was carrying a large amount of Special Items.

Aliba knew that he was only alive now because Gong Daoyi had something to say to him. It wasn't hard to guess. Consequently, he pursed his lips and remained silent.

It was as if Gong Daoyi understood his thoughts. The man smiled

forgivingly and said, "Mr. Chief of Police, why are you so nervous? If I wanted to hurt you, I would have already done so."

As Aliba lowered his eyes, Gong Daoyi's polished shoes reflected the moonlight coming through the window. He suddenly realized that the man actually wore a full ironed suit even in such a situation.

"I have information that I'm sure would interested you, Mr. Chief of Police." The person under the dim moonlight smiled.

"Among the posthumans who have escaped the Lunar New Year Fighting Tournament, 43 of them have formed multiple small teams which will attack various landmarks in Garden of Eden tonight." Even though Gong Daoyi spoke softly, Aliba quickly looked up, astounded.

"What time? Where? How did you get this information?" he immediately questioned...

Gong Daoyi crooked his head and looked at the luminous clock as he held his chin, thinking—as if he was considering something difficult. Suddenly, he snapped his fingers and laughed, "They're already on their way. Mr. Chief of Police, if you don't hurry, you might be too late."

When Lin Sanjiu split up the team and their tasks, Gong Daoyi was not around. By then, Lin Sanjiu had already cordially invited him to leave. However, Gong Daoyi had other means of getting that information which did not require him to be present, "They are going to attack some strategic locations. So, I am sure Mr. Chief of Police would definitely know better than me."

That was a given. Alibra was already thinking of various locations where their anti-radiation resources were kept, but he quickly hid his thoughts and gave a cold laugh, "What do you get out of this?"

"Let me put it this way. I've already earned my keep." Gong Daoyi

replied, grinning.

Aliba somewhat got his point. This man had already stolen that batch of Special Items, but they would only be valuable if he could move them out of Garden of Eden. Judging from the situation, he probably planed to escape while both sides were fighting. He sneered inwardly and asked, "Why should I believe you?" Despite saying that, Aliba was already planning the allocation of his troops in his mind.

"You must be joking, Mr. Chief of Police." Gong Daoyi didn't say anything more about it and stood up soundlessly. In the same soothing voice, he concluded, "Since I've already passed the message, I'm leaving—"

Before he could finish his sentence, he was abruptly interrupted. The woman who had been lying on the bed suddenly woke up. A bright beam of light flowed through her arm as she created circular gestures in midair. Following which, halos of light were sent in Gong Daoyi's direction. Though the attacks were as quick as lightning, when they reached Gong Daoyi's position, the only thing pulverized was a chair in Aliba's bedroom. When the naked woman with disheveled hair turned around, she realized that Gong Daoyi was already at the edge of the window.

"It isn't nice to treat your guest like this, Mr. Chief of Police." Gong Daoyi unbuttoned the top two buttons on his shirt, revealing his radiant skin. "But I have to applaud you for your vigilance. Placing a humanoid Special Item on your bed..."

Aliba almost turned green. Two explosions later, there was only a broken window frame where Gong Daoyi previously stood. The loud noise alerted the guards and a voice sounded over his radio, "Sir! What happened?"

"I need you to assemble all our troops. Go now!" Aliba roared vehemently.

Chapter 146: Do You Need Help?

"Why don't you try to contact her again? Maybe, Li Tao didn't hear the call just now." Xu Wei urged Bai Xiaoke softly as she looked at her hopefully. The few of them who had worked together since the tournament until now were unsurprisingly grouped together. At the moment, the four women and a male escort were sneaking quietly into an industrial park filled with short white buildings.

Every team had one communicator—the wristband that every Garden of Eden resident owned was something considerably valuable to a posthuman—and Xueqin had ensured that each team had the contact of all the other teams. As Li Tao wanted to go to the black tower alone, they had to steal another communicator for her. It took them a considerable amount of time to get it. Yet, now they didn't know why she was uncontactable.

"That thing on her wrist vibrates. How can she not hear it?" Dong Haohao retorted with her usual biting attitude. "I think she must be in some sort of situation... She'd better not run away!"

Xueqin was somewhat guileless and hearing that, she kept an awkward silence. After a while, she stammered, "Um, you are thinking ahead of yourself. That's not possible..."

Bai Xiaoke squeezed between the two of them and rolled her eyes. She threw a glance at Xueqin and realized that the latter was just lying still. Bai Xiaoke had no idea what she was thinking. After being jabbed a couple of times by the escort, Xueqin finally regained her focus. She frowned and looked at the others, "Regarding the situation at the black tower, we just have to wait for Li Tao to call back. Let's not think about it for now. But, what should we do since we are here?"

The three women suddenly kept quiet. Hesitating for a moment, Xu Wei turned to look behind her with a timid expression. The

women were hiding at the back of a small building. Peeking out from behind the structure, they could see the entire compound of Garden of Eden Laboratories. The word 'Laboratories' actually meant the ten buildings in the compound. Those buildings were rectangular and had a sleek and smooth facade. The edges of the buildings were distinctly sharp and they had no visible doors and windows. Made of an unknown materials, the buildings with their metallic shine were like emotionless robotic monsters crouching in the darkness, spying at humanity.

Every now and then, a red beam shot out from the top of each building, piercing through the darkness and going over every inch of the compound. With ten beams of light, the area they covered intersected, leaving almost no blind spot. Though the women did not know the exact function of the red beams, none of them wanted to risk being scanned by it. It wasn't easy for them to find the hiding spot they were at, as they had to observe those beams for a long time.

Although their spot was safe, it was absolutely useless. It was at least a few hundred meters away from the nearest laboratory building, so it wasn't any different from standing on the road outside.

Their team was originally supposed to destroy a factory that manufactured anti-radiation suits, but when they arrived there they wanted to try their luck looking for Lin Sanjiu, and that was how they finally ended in this dilemma.

"Let's destroy this place!" Bai Xiaoke raised her brows, with hostility in her eyes. "It doesn't matter what we destroy anyway! Besides, isn't this place worse than that factory!"

Lin Sanjiu had warned them not to come here. Xu Wei wanted to say something but she quickly swallowed her words when she saw her companions. For all of them who had experienced the brutality of the Lunar New Year Tournament, Garden of Eden Laboratories evoked a sort of physiological disgust in them. Bai Xiaoke's

suggestion was instantly accepted unanimously.

"Listen up." While the red beams paused for a few short seconds, the women approached the nearest building swiftly and cautiously. At the same time, they were listening to Xueqin, "There are all sorts of weird things in the lab. Some of them might be useful to us but there are devices which are specifically designed to deal with..."

While she spoke, the red beams from the building started moving again. The very next second, the red beam swept across the ground the women were at just moments before. Their hearts pounded crazily while Bai Xiaoke pulled out an access card they had retrieved from the security guard at the gate. She waved the card in front of the building's smooth walls, in an experimental way.

A few lines of words appeared on the white metallic surface of the wall and the red beam immediately stopped before it reached that particular wall.

"Lucky. That short-lived bastard didn't lie to us." Dong Haohao sighed in relief.

After verifying the information on the access card, the wall slid open soundlessly and revealed a large hall. The women rushed in immediately, armed with their weapons. When they stepped on the floor of the large hall, a gentle, cream-white light filled the space. The white hall was impeccably clean but the internal frame of the place was odd. It was as if the building was gradually coming alive.

The women surveyed the empty hall and were unable to tell its particular function. Bai Xiaoke crouched and touched the surface of the floor. She suddenly sounded a little despondent, "What is this material... Can it be burned?"

Xueqin scoffed at that primitive idea, "These laboratories are important so there must be a fire suppression system. Don't even try to burn this place down. Let's move to the corridor. Everyone,

be careful." Even though she was just a 'common folk' in the Garden of Eden, Xueqin definitely knew more about this place than the posthumans.

To better describe this place, the building was a little like a hospital. However, what they saw behind each of those windowed doors was very different. Some of the rooms were filled with apparatus and others were filled with giant Petri dishes. Xueqin looked around the place, with the escort carrying her, as if searching for something. Bai Xiaoke could only follow her blindly while controlling the escort.

"This is weird. I am sure there must be a security system. Where is it?" she mumbled to Bai Xiaoke.

When she finished her sentence, a loud sound erupted behind them. Their hearts nearly exploded. Both women turned behind and saw that Xu Wei's fists were glowing with a faint white light. Before Xueqin could stop her, Dong Haohao's voice rang out, "Smash it again!" Xu Wei struck the door to a room with another massive punch. "Clunk!" She finally smashed the door open.

Xueqin felt her heart sink but they did not hear any alarm even after some time. She exchanged a look with Bai Xiaoke, feeling perplexed. Meanwhile, Xu Wei and Dong Haohao already entered the room excitedly. They were about to follow behind when Xueqin suddenly felt the escort becoming shorter. She nearly slid down from his back.

"Aghh, I have used it for too long. Look how short it is!" Bai Xiaoke stopped as she clicked her tongue, lamenting. "It is not even 1.6m now. I think it would only last about another ten to twenty minutes..."

Right now, Xueqin was dragged around rather than being piggybacked. Xueqin wanted to check the room anxiously, and simply replied, "Why don't you summon another one—"

Bai Xiaoke rolled her eyes but before she could rebut that it was

not that easy, she suddenly froze because... the corridor became unusually silent.

If it weren't for the occasional sounds of broken fragments falling, she would almost believe that no one had ever been in this place. Surprisingly, they did not hear any sound from the room that Xu Wei and Dong Haohao had just entered. The two women looked at each other and rushed to the door.

There wasn't much in the room. There were just a few round metallic holes on the ceiling and the floor was covered by a thick layer of light yellow, translucent, gel-like substance. But, the thing that shocked the women the most were their companions, who were alright just seconds before.

Xu Wei and Dong Haohao were still alive but they couldn't even make a sound. They were both encased in the light yellow gel-like substance. It was as if they were swallowed by two globs of giant jelly. Dong Haohao had activated her [National Tax agency] and Xu Wei had activated her [Impact Drill]. Though it seemed that the 'jelly' didn't physically harm them, the substance was extremely malleable and could basically also trap the women's abilities along with them.

Seeing their movements gradually getting slower and them looking more and more exhausted, Bai Xiaoke couldn't hold herself back any longer. Luckily, she was very prudent, so she placed Xueqin down on the ground and commanded her escort to rush into the room. Unexpectedly, once her escort stepped onto that gel-like substance, the thick layer of gel suddenly swallowed his legs as though it was alive. At the same time, more of that 'jelly' sprayed out from the holes in the ceiling. It took less than two seconds for her escort to be wrapped up like the others.

Bai Xiaoke cursed softly and snapped her fingers. The escort in the 'jelly' immediately withered and stopped moving. Suddenly, she heard a slightly amused voice, "Oh? That isn't a posthuman."

Then, another man responded blandly, "That must be its ability."

Xueqin turned stiffly. Following the source of the voices, she spotted a black, narrow strip by the side of the door. She let out a bitter laugh and sighed before whispering to Bai Xiaoke, "The researchers here have been watching us."

The black strip was a type of screen rarely seen by normal people. It could capture images and sounds from a very large area and it could also broadcast sound. Another male researcher laughed, "Ever since you guys step into our industrial park, we already spotted you. Both of you are lucky you weren't made into amber."

He was probably entertained by the expressions on their faces so he guffawed, "Do you think we do our experiments in these buildings? You can't be more wrong. These ten buildings are our experiments, and they can do a lot—"

"Dodge!" Bai Xiaoke suddenly yelled. Before the researcher finished his words, she had already crouched forward and pushed Xueqin away. A gust of wind, accompanied by a white light, brushed past their heads. "BOOM!" the light hit the wall and created a shallow dent. Both women knew what that attack was. They had seen it countless times during the Lunar New Year Tournament. Xu Wei, who was tightly wrapped in resin, stared at the open door with bewilderment on her face. Both her hands were still stuck in a struggling position.

The monotonous voice rang out again, "There is still a 0.6s to 0.9s delay for the ability reflected by the 'amber resin'..."

"Let's talk about the figures later. We have to capture those two first."

"Polly, open door 22. Release the 'Microorganism Cloud'."

Bai Xiaoke had just evaded the previous attack when she heard the door behind her open with a click. She carried Xueqin hastily and dashed for the exit, although she was partly dragging the

woman because she was petite, albeit strong enough.

"Why can't you summon another escort?!" Xueqin saw the light purple cloud of mist filling up the corridor behind them. It was catching up to them. "If this goes on, we will all die!" she shouted anxiously.

"You've got to be kidding!" Bai Xiaoke's forehead was drenched in sweat, "Do you know what is the condition for me to summon an escort! I need to crave for a dashing young man! You are asking me to f*cking think of men now?"

Xueqin choked when she heard those words. She didn't make another comment and just when she saw the fastest portion of the purple mist reaching them, she quickly activated her ability, [The housewife haunted by the spirits who had gone under her kitchen knife]. "Pop!" A large spongy black umbrella shadow sprouted out from her wrist and prevented the purple mist from reaching them. It was an extremely large mushroom and it jammed the corridor from the ceiling to the floor. The purple mist was successfully blocked, for now.

"Those spirits under your knife are quite incredulous..." Bai Xiaoke was amazed when she turned to look behind her.

"We are not out of danger," Xueqin's face twisted with pain. "The mushroom is being attacked. I can't maintain this for long... I know. Go to the toilet!"

"Why should I go there?"

"I am sure there isn't a monitoring screen installed there. We can hide there for a while!" Xueqin said and used her mouth to free a knife strapped to her arm. She held the knife in her hand and continued, "We will think of a way when we get there!" After all, with two of their team members trapped, they couldn't leave now.

Even though the researchers mentioned that the buildings themselves were experiments, they did still use them as research

labs. Since this was their working environment, it was only logical that there must be toilets here. The two women found a toilet in no time and rushed into it under the protection of the mushroom.

While Xueqin withdrew the mushroom, Bai Xiaoke slammed the door shut. From the narrow gap under the door, they could still see the purple mist which rushed forward searching for the two women, as if it had a mind of its own.

"Quick! Stuff something in that gap," Xueqin said as she panted.

Bai Xiaoke took off her jacket in a fluster and grabbed some toilet paper. She squished her jacket and the toilet paper under the door desperately, even though she didn't know if it could block the purple mist. However, that was all they had. She continued busily but suddenly stopped halfway.

"What's wrong?"

"I got a message."

She turned pale as she showed the screen of the communicator on her wrist to Xueqin. The wristband hummed, vibrating non-stop. The projected screen was filled with messages and their contents were almost all the same, "We encountered the military on the way to our destination! We need backup if anyone's nearby!"

"We were ambushed by the police before we even reached our target!"

"We are surrounded!"

After counting, they realized that at least eight teams were sending such messages. Those probably weren't the worst cases. When Xueqin thought of the teams which couldn't even send any messages, she felt her heart falling into the pit of her stomach.

The two women stared blankly at the screen for some time with a bitter taste in their mouths.

"What... what should we do?" Bai Xiaoke asked tardily after some time.

Xueqin didn't know what to do either. Three months before, she was just a woman who thought about how to scrimp everyday... Just when they found themselves totally helpless, the screen skipped and a communication request popped up.

Bai Xiaoke sighed thinking that it was another team. When the call connected, she was stunned and she quickly poked Xueqin.

"I saw many policemen on my way out," a voice like a clear spring came out from the device. Amidst his intonations and pauses, there was a sort of charm which compelled people to listen. Gong Daoyi narrowed his star-sprinkled eyes and asked kindly, "I just saved three other girls. They say they were from a team... Where are you now? Do you need my help?"

Chapter 147: Reunion After a Near Death Encounter

Xueqin felt a sudden wave of suspicion, but those feelings abated when she saw the faces of the rescued members of the other team. She recognized them. One of them was even the first person to start dancing on the table. The girl had jet-black hair so dark that it was as if it could even overshadow the color of the night, so she gave a strong impression to everyone.

Bai Xiaoke had already relaxed her shoulders as she whispered to the girl on the other end, "What happened?"

The girl with the jet-black hair was called Allo. She wiped off the blood on her face, almost as if to erase her panic, and replied breathily, "We were attacked by the military! At that time, it was too dark so we couldn't even tell how many people they had. Luckily, Mr. Gong saved us, but we still lost contact with one of our members."

Under those circumstances, the probability of the missing member surviving was minuscular. Allo became dejected after she said that.

Xueqi and Bai Xiaoke were momentarily at a loss for words. Before they got over their shock to speak, Gong Daoyi asked, "Why are you two in the men's toilet?" He could clearly see the urinals behind the two women in the lit toilet.

His words reminded Bai Xiaoke about their current situation and once again she had a bitter taste in her mouth. She told Gong Daoyi about their whole predicament, "We are trapped here right now. Dong Haohao and Xu Wei are stuck in resin and I don't know how long they will last..."

Her voice trailed off toward the end. [Does it matter even if we managed to contact the other teams? Disregarding the fact that

most of them are busy dealing with the military, even if there were any teams available to help now, this laboratory is too dangerous. If we ask anyone to come, aren't we asking them to court death? Besides, can we even survive till then... Maybe, we might have to use this soon...] Bai Xiaoke thought to herself as she touched the gun by her waist and threw a glance at Xueqin. The latter pursed her lips obstinately but revealed helplessness in her eyes.

"Don't come here. The laboratories are too dangerous... You guys just have to save the other teams." Bai Xiaoke never ever imagined that she would ever say something that selfless. It pained her to say that, as every word grated her throat.

Allo fell silent. She knew that if they rushed to the laboratories only after meeting up and helping the other teams, Xueqin and the others would probably be dead by then. Her eyes reddened and she muttered "Take care", and the screen was suddenly pulled over by another person. The screen wobbled for a moment before it stabilized and focused on Gong Daoyi's face.

"I have an idea that might save everyone," he leaned forward slightly as he spoke, revealing his well-defined chest under his unbuttoned shirt. "Allo, just follow the plan I told you just now. I'll deal with the situation at the laboratory. Can both of you last for another six minutes?"

Gong Daoyi spoke in an even-mannered tone, but his words were like a ray of hope for the two despairing women. Xueqin stared at him in a daze, feeling conflicted. For a moment, there were so many words she wanted to say to him. She wanted to ask if he was planning something to sabotage them. Yet, with the current situation, if he really wanted to harm them, he just had to choose not to save them. He wouldn't need to take this risk. In the end, she just nodded wordlessly.

"Alright. Wait for me. I'll be there in six minutes. I'm disconnecting—" Gong Daoyi smiled and his eyes sparkled like diamonds. Just when he reached his hand out turn it off, Bai

Xiaoke suddenly shouted, "Wait! Can you pull your hair to the back?"

Gong Daoyi paused for a second before obediently combing his hair back using his long fingers.

Bai Xiaoke stared at the screen for some time, she suddenly exhaled deeply. A shadow was cast over Xueqin's shoulders and she noticed it. She turned behind and saw a new escort, he was 1.9m and had a muscular frame with well-defined abs. Xueqin's face instantly darkened. Enduring the pain from her broken bones, she reached out and disconnected the call.

After a few of Bai Xiaoke's awkward laughs, the toilet became quiet again. The two women fixed their eyes on the communicator, watching the seconds tick by. Whenever the digits changed, they would imagine hearing the sound of the "Microorganism Cloud" corroding the toilet door. But when they listened carefully, they heard nothing outside, it was almost like they had been completely forgotten. Unexpectedly, nothing actually happened for the next five minutes.

It was logical. Since the people looking for them were only researchers and not professional militants, they weren't that good in the business of searching their targets... Xueqin exhaled, preparing to say something when she suddenly felt the floor shifting and she fell to the ground. Next, they felt a second of weightlessness before their bodies, including the escort, were firmly restrained to the ground. The floor began to sink and the gap under the door, stuffed with a jacket and toilet paper, grew farther and farther away from them...

"Haha! I forgot to mention. The laboratory is designed with the concept of building blocks. Each room can be taken apart!"

Though the toilet shouldn't have any monitoring screen, the two women could hear that man's voice clearly as the floor and the walls quickly slid apart.

"Stop playing. Quick, get them in the pool," the dry monotonous voice ordered. With that said, the toilet floor began to slant almost to a 90 degree while the door swung open with a swoosh. The door opened to total darkness so they couldn't see what that 'pool' was. The two women didn't really have the time to look, anyway, as they were sliding down the slanted floor. The escort held on to a urinal with one hand, with Xueqin on his back, while Bai Xiaoke was grabbing onto his other hand. Meanwhile, the toilet floor continued tilting and even started to shake as if determined to shake off the three pests stuck to it.

"How long has it been? My arm... I can't hold on much longer..." Bai Xiaoke complained, she tried her best to tread on the ground, trying to gain some traction. The escort was her ability, so she had to keep her ability activated to keep both Xueqin and herself alive. This took a toll on her and her forehead was covered with sweat.

Before this, the communicator had already slid away from them and into the black pool beneath without making even a sound. Xueqin had to cling onto the escort with her broken arms, the pain was so intense that she couldn't even make a sound in response.

"Okay! You can jump over now," they heard someone say with a blithe voice.

Bai Xiaoke, who had been trying her best to hold on, felt a sudden fury. She was just about to curse loudly when she remembered something. She turned her head and she almost burst into tears. Somehow, a large black hole had appeared on one of the walls of the toilet. Gong Daoyi held the edge of the hole while he beckoned for them with his other hand, "Quick!"

"Mr. Gong, you are finally here," she said hoarsely.

She could hear the vague sounds of the researchers scrambling, "What is that?"

[Wormhole]

The most common way to explain the concept on wormholes in the universe is to fold a piece of paper and to punch a hole through it. Using this concept, this special item can pierce through spacetime, providing the shortest passageway between two points in spacetime. A maximum of ten people can travel through the wormhole each time. This is a god-sent tool for spying and assassination.

This is a consumable item. Each of this item can only be used once.

The value of a [Wormhole] was pretty much self-explanatory, so even Xueqin couldn't help feeling a little moved.

The passageway of the wormhole was very dark, but the peculiar thing about it was that one could sense the faint flow of ultraviolet light. After Gong Daoyi stabilized the wormhole, he dispatched the bird which helped eat away the doors of the capsules in the arena. This time, its mission was to eat amber. The two women waited anxiously in the wormhole. After some time, they saw Dong Haohao and Xu Wei behind the bird which returned to them and they also leaped into the wormhole.

Dong Haohao was covered with blood and her face was filled with animosity. "We killed the two researchers who came to check the wormhole," she panted as she said that, "That felt fantastic!"

It was a miracle that all four women survived. They chatted as they walked and followed Gong Daoyi. Before they could calm themselves down, they had already reached the exit.

Afterwards, Gong Daoyi waved his hand and opened the exit. He was the first to step out of the wormhole. The ultraviolet light suddenly stopped as if losing all momentum, it froze and faded away. A dusky-yellow light poured in from the opening. Bai Xiaoke stepped outside and was startled by the soft, fluffy texture beneath her feet. She was standing on a woolen rug.

Not far from them, someone scoffed loudly. They turned to the

direction of the sound and found a man standing in the hall. It was the Chief of Police, Aliba.

Chapter 148: Maniac

"It isn't hard to let you people go, but why should I do that?"

The mayor's office in the city hall was a large semicircular room. There was a large thick wool rug in the middle, and the floor lamp in the room had been dimmed, so the surroundings were now an orange-yellow, like the color of sunset dipped in water. The screen showing Aliba's image was hidden between the boundary of the shadows in the room and light poured from it.

Aliba scanned the entire office with his long slitted eyes. When he saw a pair of feet poking out from behind the office table, his facial muscles twitched a little. As if to control his emotions from showing, he knocked on his own table. He still had a very strong impression of those pair of leather shoes...

Aliba felt his guts trembling slightly, and a sort of murky, indistinct idea popped up in his head. He coughed and smiled coldly, "When you people escaped from the Lunar New Year Tournament, I was humiliated. Now, you are begging me to pull back the policemen and soldiers? Why should I? Ha. And I already know where you are, so I can simply send my men to surround you!"

When they heard Aliba's words, Xueqin, Bai Xiaoke and the others exchanged glances and realized that they all looked a little pale. None of them expected to have a conversation with Aliba there. When they first stepped out of the wormhole, their first thought was that Gong Daoyi had betrayed them. It took half a second before Xue Wei noticed that they were looking at a full-body screen and it showed the 1:1 image of Aliba in his uniform. She blinked her eyes multiple times because it really looked like he was standing in the room.

"Didn't I say that I have an idea that might save everyone?" The women's expressions relaxed a little after hearing Gong Daoyi's

warm, soothing voice. "Before I went to look for all of you, I made a call to Mr. Chief of Police's communicator."

Negotiation. That was Gong Daoyi's intention.

He was the only one among them who seemed prepared for this. All the women turned to look at him, except Xueqin. She did not even want to see his face and uttered coldly, "If you have anything to say to him, make it quick!"

Gong Daoyi was unoffended and just nodded. When he turned to look at the screen, a glint flashed past his star-sprinkled eyes as if he just suppressed an urge to laugh after remembering something funny, but no one noticed. He pointed at the mayor's office table and commented mildly, "Mr. Chief of Police, I am sure you already noticed that the Mayor is dead."

"So what?" Aliba tried to conceal his hidden intentions, "You'll only die faster!"

"Is that so?" Gong Daoyi smiled, "I personally think that it is a convenient fact for the mayor to die in this insurrection."

Aliba's eyelids twitched and he didn't reply. When he could no longer cover up the news of the female Posthumans escaping, the official from the Administrative Office forced him to appear in the courts. Aliba had to use a lot of his connections to reduce the disciplinary actions so that he was only temporarily monitored. Admittedly, he sent out the troops to stop the insurrection because he wanted to atone for his mistakes. However, no matter how hard he tried to make up for the failure, death was the most efficient way to get rid of his rival...

"Let's make a deal." Gong Daoyi thrust his hands into his pocket, his tall, slender silhouette cut a striking figure. "Your Lordship will provide a way for all of our people to gather here. When we see that everyone is well, you, Mr. Chief of Police, can choose any target that you would like our teams to destroy... What do you say?"

"Doesn't that mean we will be working for him?" Bai Xiaoke, who was standing behind him, gasped.

Aliba felt his heart racing. Even though he had control of the army, there were too many political checks and balances. If all his political opponents were killed... that would mean that Garden of Eden would become his private corporation. When he thought of this, he felt a warm gush of excitement in his chest. He opened his mouth but didn't speak, observing all the people in the room with his signature gloomy gaze instead.

"To us, it makes no difference who we kill and what we destroy," Gong Daoyi did not turn behind but spoke calmly, in a manner which seemingly answered the doubts that the women had, "if a change in target could help us redeem a life, I think this deal is pretty worthwhile.

"After all, from your perspective, if you risked everything to fight with us and someone else ended up taking the credit, wouldn't that be a little unfair? You can decide on the locations and you can also decide on the number of people in the teams sent there."

"However, we need Mr. Chief of Police to show us a little sincerity," when Gong Daoyi said that, the man in the screen cocked his head. "How will your Lordship ensure that we can leave safely after the whole operation?"

Gong Daoyi spoke slowly, and each of his words played to Aliba's emotions. Aliba couldn't control his pulsing heart. He raised his head and burst out into laughter. He raised his finger and pointed to Gong Daoyi from the screen, "Okay! It's a deal. When everything is done, I'll let all of you go. My words are the only guarantee you need. You will all leave in one piece."

Xueqin sneered. She was angry and found it beneath her dignity. But before she could comment, Bai Xiaoke tugged her shirt and stopped her.

"Let's just see how Mr. Gong will handle this," she whispered,

trusting fully in the man.

Failing their expectations, they were all shocked when Gong Daoyi simply accepted it, "Good. It's a promise, then. We will contact our companions now. Can your Lordship please call away the troops?"

When they heard this, the women began to feel uneasy but they didn't say anything as Aliba was still watching. Aliba didn't anticipate that the other party would accept his words so readily. He narrowed his eyes and examined Gong Daoyi. He couldn't help having second thoughts. It took him a few seconds before he forced a smile and said, "I don't know what's wrong with you. Why would you sell them out and then save them..."

Aliba was certain that the female posthumans did not know that Gong Daoyi leaked the information about their operations. He could place a mental ticking time bomb in that team just by saying that, and it might come in handy...

But, he was disappointed the next second—the female posthumans frowned but their expressions didn't change much. Following which, Gong Daoyi approached the screen and knocked the base of the communicator a few times. With a face of pure bewilderment, he asked, "Hello? Why isn't there any sound? Is it some kind of signal interference?"

At the same time, Aliba had to admit that he admired Gong Daoyi's tact.

After the 'signal' recovered, both men quickly worked out the details. After that, Aliba disconnected and disappeared from the screen. Once the screen turned black, Dong Haohao who had held herself back for a long time suddenly went straight to the point and asked, "We are going to create trouble and assassinate who he wants us to get rid of. Aren't you afraid that he would just catch all of us in the end so that he can be the hero of the day?"

"Ah... Don't worry. It's okay." Gong Daoyi flashed her a lazy

smile, he combed his hair to the back of his head, "Just leave it to me."

Nevertheless, he acted like Dong Haohao's words didn't matter to him. The five simple words from him were somehow extremely convincing. The women looked at each other and didn't make any more comments. They still had a long night ahead of them.

In the end, nine teams managed to get in touch with Xueqin's team. They still couldn't contact one of the teams, which meant that it was probably too late for them. Not all nine teams were intact. It took some effort for everyone to understand the current situation and for them to get out of their scary predicament of getting surrounded. Some of them were wounded, dead and quite a few of them had abandoned their teams. In the end, only three-fourths of the original numbers gathered in the city hall.

By then, it was already 4 am.

During this time, Bai Xiaoke couldn't reach Li Tao despite the countless number of calls; Lin Sanjiu didn't show her face all this time. One of the teams that went past the meeting point also reported that they didn't see anyone at the factory. Perhaps the lack of Lin Sanjiu's appearance made everyone on tenterhooks. This unwittingly created a heavy atmosphere where the women whispered to each other and started panicking. In turn, the words exchanged generated even more panic.

On the other hand, Aliba's orders were urgent. They did not have any time to slowly discuss the situation. They only had one hour till sunrise, or this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity would just fade away. After pointing out four targets which must be exterminated, the teams which retained most of their manpower had no choice but to set off immediately.

Before this night, none of the posthumans imagined that they would ever work for the Police and Military Department. While they resented and fretted over their circumstances, Lin Sanjiu

sighed and cursed.

"I'd never f*cking imagine that there is a maniac like you in this world."

Chapter 149: St. Peter Brews Tieguanyin Tea

Just an hour ago, Lin Sanjiu barely dodged a powerful attack.

When that silent but unusually vicious gust of wind gushed out out of nowhere without any warning, Li Tao was on the stairs blocking Lin Sanjiu from climbing to the top floor. At that point, Lin Sanjiu still had no clue about her identity.

Li Tao did not move a single inch. She placed her left hand on the handrails and watched with a smile as the abnormal wind lashed out at Lin Sanjiu.

Due to the limited area within the black tower, the staircase was very narrow, perhaps only wide enough for one person. The offensive attack swept toward her almost like a whirlwind. Lin Sanjiu immediately found herself in a thorny situation. Thought she had already retreated down a few steps, the narrow space made it impossible to evade the black shadow which headed directly at her. She gritted her teeth and held the handrail with one hand before flinging her body into the air. The attacker nearly brushed the tip of her nose before it stopped by the nearest bend.

Lin Sanjiu hung from the handrails and if she looked down there would be only a bottomless darkness beneath her. At this height, anyone would be afraid of falling. Lin Sanjiu did not dare to look down, and when the creature stopped she quickly took advantage of the time she had and jumped back onto the stairs. It was only then that she saw the general appearance of her attacker.

It was a nearly two-meter-tall figure, with a sharp, pointed head. Its head looked comparatively small when compared its thick neck. It did have something similar to a human's shoulders, two arms which extend from its shoulders and... another two arms growing out from both sides of its body.

"Duo-duoluo zhong?" Lin Sanjiu exclaimed softly. As soon as she saw anything obviously inhuman yet with an appearance similar to

a human, the first thing that came to her mind was that it was a duoluozhong.

"No, it isn't." Li Tao, who did nothing while all that was happening, replied as she stood at the end of the staircase. "Duoluozhongs are such disgusting things."

Because of the sudden turn of events, Lin Sanjiu found herself between a rock and a hard place, Li Tao was to her left and the strange creature was on her right. Lin Sanjiu shuffled her legs, pressing her back against the wall before she took a deep breath and asked cautiously, "What is that?"

"St. Peter, come here."

Hearing Li Tao's voice, which carried a hint of cheerfulness, the tall figure turned its body and slowly walked up the stairs as if it was following an undefiable command. Soon, his black shadow loomed over Lin Sanjiu. A scentless wind swept past her and she couldn't help tensing up. Oddly, he did not even glance down at her for a second but instead walked to Li Tao's side like an obedient little dog.

"It's too dark here. Don't you want to go to the top floor?" Li Tao's voice rang out clearly in the darkness, "Come up here with me, I'll explain everything to you."

Lin Sanjiu sneered, "Do you think I'm a fool? Your attack missed so you are going to change your tactics?"

Li Tao shook her head and using a tone as if coaxing a naive child, she said, "Oh, come on. I'm impressed by you so don't waste it. If I really wanted to harm you, why should I wait for you to reach the top? I don't even need to use St. Peter... That was just a little test. If you died, I would have just left things as they were."

Although Lin Sanjiu did not have any reason to believe her, she felt that Li Tao was being honest with her. After she hesitated for two seconds, she finally climbed up the stairs towards the top of

the winding staircase.

As if reaching the light at the end of a tunnel, after Lin Sanjiu walked away from the narrow staircase, she found herself in a spacious hall lit by the faint light from the stars outside. It was as if everything in the room had gently been sketched out with a silver brush.

The top floor was surprisingly large. The shape of the hall was a combination of a few large and small rectangular spaces. The walls on this floor were much thinner and this perhaps made the hall seem larger than it was. The first thing that Lin Sanjiu noticed when she climbed up was a large, clear, transparent glass wall.

Through the glass wall, she could see a panoramic view of the Garden of Eden under the night sky. Lin Sanjiu surveyed the scenery and immediately frowned slightly.

The Garden of Eden seemed a little too calm... The night view of the city sleeping under the navy blue sky was dotted with the neatly arranged floating street lights and the occasional houses which had their lights on. Lin Sanjiu anticipated a scene of chaos, flames and even explosions across the city, but there was not a single trace of such turmoil right now.

[Aren't they a bit too slow?]

However, Lin Sanjiu didn't dare to spend too much time thinking about that. After all, she still had two mysterious enemies by her side, and she couldn't even comprehend their motivations. Her eyes swept across the large hall and she found a corner to stand. She turned and smiled to Li Tao and St. Peter, "I thought the power source should be here."

"No," Li Tao laughed amicably, "Who told you that? That's just a load of nonsense. The radiation shield doesn't require any energy source."

As they chatted, Li Tao wandered toward the glass wall. She

snapped her fingers and the creature she called 'St. Peter' immediately walked to a corner of the room. After a while, it walked out holding a cup of hot tea. Li Tao was behaving as if she was in her own house...

"Why are you so familiar with this place?" Lin Sanjiu asked as she looked at the stairs. She had a clear path to the spiral staircase. "Who are you?"

To Lin Sanjiu, the more pressing question in her mind was whether it was still possible to destroy the radiation shield. As the pale starlight shone through the window, Li Tao threw a glance at Lin Sanjiu. In that single moment, Lin Sanjiu felt as if she had been fully examined from the inside out. Lin Sanjiu felt an ice-cold chill through her body while Li Tao gave her an indulgent smile before turning her eyes to the panoramic view of Garden of Eden beneath them.

"Honestly speaking, Garden of Eden should call me 'mother'." Li Tao's words stung with mockery as she knocked on the glass wall with her white fingers.

Lin Sanjiu almost lost her balance. She heard the sound of her blood rushing through the blood vessels in her ears as she stood in a daze, unable to process what Li Tao had said.

"I'm already 94 years old this year," the woman who stood by the glass wall, which reflected the profile of her slender silhouette, explained calmly. "I built Garden of Eden 59 years ago. For some of us, Posthumans, maintaining our looks, extending our lifespans and even gaining immortality isn't all that uncommon. You don't have to look at me like this."

Lin Sanjiu closed her mouth. For a moment, she could not digest this piece of news. Many questions floated in her mind but she found herself speechless. It took quite a while before she managed a few words, "You... you said you built this place?"

"Yes." This question seemed to evoke Li Tao's past memories. She

sighed silently and looked up at the dark blue sky. "At that time, the World War had already been ongoing for two years, and the situation was deteriorating each day. Only a few countries were uninvolved in the war. Luckily, my research facility I was working in was situated in one of these neutral countries.

"Even though everybody had nuclear bombs, no one dared to use them. Thus, the war dragged on, despite intensity. But then, a large country suddenly developed a technology which could counter nuclear bombs."

Lin Sanjiu felt nothing else she heard could shock her at this point.

"The principle behind this technology is to compress the power released by the nuclear fission... In any case, the technology was very unstable. It still required a long developmental phase before it could be perfected. However, during war times, which government would forgo using such a weapon? This technology was quickly employed in the real battlefield.

"I think I don't have to go on about the ensuing chaos that followed. You could probably imagine the scenario. After that big country wreaked havoc for almost a year. The unstable anti-nuclear bomb technology had already caused a serious radiation contamination. It was so bad that even animals in the neutral countries far from the war-torn territories were dying from radiation... To make things worse, other countries involved in the war had somehow gotten access to that technology."

"So, you built the Garden of Eden in order to protect humanity? But, how was it possible for you to do this alone?" Lin Sanjiu couldn't help interrupting.

"Creating the Garden of Eden wasn't as difficult as you think." Li Tao crooked her head slightly, "I utilized some resources and managed to openly propose the idea to the Congress. Under those circumstances, it was naturally approved. I was in charge of the

entire blueprint, from its design to the selection of materials. Garden of Eden was indeed my creation, but..." She paused and watched Lin Sanjiu while a smile surfaced at the corner of her lips, "I did not build it to protect humanity."

Lin Sanjiu gulped. Her throat was dry and she felt the hairs on her back standing on end.

"By then, I had already evolved. My first ability, I don't mind telling you, was called [A perfect plan could occasionally exist]. Hearing its name, you should have a general idea of how it works, right? Following the plans generated through my ability, 'Garden of Eden' was completed on the same day the world was destroyed."

Lin Sanjiu stared at her blankly.

When St. Peter noticed Li Tao's teacup was empty, he filled her cup with tea and handed it back to her, using the arms sticking out from his ribs.

"I am the only one who knows how to get into Garden of Eden." Li Tao's eyes narrowed into crescent curves as her smile grew wide. Lin Sanjiu couldn't sense the slightest bit of genuineness in that smile, instead, it creeped her out.

"Can you imagine? Everyone that was still alive wanted to enter this place desperately."

"What happened next?" Lin Sanjiu suppressed her uneasiness and subconsciously turned her eyes away from Li Tao's smile.

"Have you heard of a social experiment like this? Once, a female performance artist sat motionless in the middle of an exhibition hall and surrounded herself with a variety of items. She promised not to react no matter what people did to her."

Lin Sanjiu was a little taken aback by Li Tao, who had suddenly changed the subject.

"You might probably think that people wouldn't do anything bad to her, not in an upper-class art gallery in broad daylight. Yes,

some people kissed her and someone placed a garland on her head. But there were people who tore away her clothes, stabbed her head with thorns and someone even put a gun to her head. And, yes, the gun was loaded. None of the audience knew her personally, they were all strangers. In the end, the most incredible thing was that there was a clear division in the group between the two extremes of good and bad, like the clear distinction between darkness and light.

"Are you curious why I brought this up? Well, an equal number of people from these two groups were allowed into the Garden of Eden. The pure light and the absolute darkness."

Lin Sanjiu glanced down at the city below her. The air around her froze and none of them moved for quite a long while. After a good few minutes, Lin Sanjiu asked hoarsely, "What happened to the light?"

[Where are the 'good' people now? Fifty-nine years later, this city turned as dark as the night sky.] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself.

Li Tao nodded her head in agreement, "As Garden of Eden developed on its own, the light had been consumed. After the good disappeared, women were oppressed and bullied just because they were physically weaker than men. The process and my current observations are in line with my hypothesis." After Li Tao finished her explanation to Lin Sanjiu, she reverted to her previous calm and mild-mannered demeanor.

"I would secretly enter this place every few years, with a different appearance, to conduct a close-up observation. Moreover, I needed to remove some people who would interfere with the experiment. But meeting you this year was really interesting."

"Wait, that means..." Lin Sanjiu's eyes widened.

"Garden of Eden is my laboratory." Li Tao flashed a gentle smile.

Chapter 150: St. Peter Isn't the only Sage

"Hahaha!" When Aliba saw the row of heads on his screen, he couldn't restrain his delight and finally burst into laughter. He never imagined that the bloodied severed heads of his hated enemies, who impeded him at every opportunity all these years, could be such a pleasing sight to behold.

"How many more targets are there?" He rapped his table, turning to his pale and nervous vice-chief, "Not many, right?"

The vice-chief hastily pulled out a list and whispered a few words to him.

On the other end of the screen, the Posthumans stood covered in blood. There was a heavy atmosphere in the air and when they occasionally looked at each other, they would notice the anxiety on each other's faces.

The Posthumans had already been re-dispatched multiple times and the number of heads on the floor just kept increasing. When a team reassembled in the city hall once again, the screen lit up with a new list of 'missions' from Aliba. The women did not want to submit to Aliba's deployments willingly, but quite a few of their wounded and incapacitated companions were now hostages of the Military and Police Department, so they simply had no choice but to fulfill the new mission.

"Let's go." Bai Xiaoke stood up. Her male escort stood up at the same with Xueqin on his back. "It's stifling here. I'd rather go outside," she commented unhappily.

The other two members in their team followed behind her wordlessly as they went to receive their next assignment.

The location of their new target was near Guang Zhu's residence, the place they illegally occupied for a night. The assassination target, the Head of Technology Department, had probably noticed

the fishy ongoing, so he set up many defense mechanisms and traps—many of which were clearly products developed by the Garden of Eden Laboratories. It took a considerable amount of effort before they got their hands on the man's severed head.

Xueqin looked out from the dead man's bedroom window and saw his servant screaming and stumbling as he ran far away. After seeing that, she lowered her eyes with a bland expression. She didn't care if that escapee alerted the authorities or anyone else. After all, these were all Aliba's future problems.

Meanwhile, Dong Haohao and the others searched the rooms in the mansion. Usually, people who held power with their high posts in the government had their own stash of Special Items. They would definitely be helpful to them, as they currently carried no items.

Bai Xiaoke held a baton in her hands after she messed up the entire cloakroom. She walked out sighing exasperatedly, "This guy has too few Special Items. He only has all these useless creations from the Garden of Eden Laboratories.

Actually, the products from the laboratories weren't all that bad. They really gave their team a hard time just now, and they were quite effective. Unfortunately, most of the items that belonged to that official were just too large to carry around.

"It'd be great if Xiao Jiu was around, she would be able to store everything," Bai Xiaoke said dejectedly. When she thought of Lin Sanjiu, she couldn't help feeling worried. She placed her baton down and tried calling Li Tao again.

When the others heard the ringing sounds from the communicator, they looked over at her. But, when no one picked up even after a few rings, they turned their focus back on their scavenging. Not even they could tell if they were disappointed or already numbed.

"Damn. Forget it," Bai Xiaoke swore quietly, reaching out to cut

the call.

But the second before she touched the button, the ringing from the communicator stopped. Bai Xiaoke was stunned momentarily, and Li Tao's face suddenly appeared on the screen. Li Tao smiled, showing no unusual behavior or expression.

"Oh, it's you. How are things there?"

[She looks different.] A fleeting thought surfaced in Bai Xiaoke's mind, but it faded to the back of her mind and was quickly forgotten. Right now, she was just excited and surprised, "You finally picked up! What happened? Where are you? Did you manage to find Xiao Jiu?"

After asking a barrage of questions, Bai Xiaoke noticed the background behind Li Tao.

The latter was standing in a dark place which was only faintly lit by the moonlight from the sky.

[Where is she?]

"It's a long story. I found her." Li Tao soft laughter interrupted Bai Xiaoke's train of thought. She looked around at the women who surrounded her and asked, "Why are your expressions so weird? Quick, tell me where are the both of you?"

Without much thought, the women began to explain their current situation, one after the other.

"I think most of Aliba's enemies are dead. I'm not sure how he will deal with us..." Bai Xiaoke wiped her face worriedly. It was only then that they realized that they still hadn't seen Lin Sanjiu over the communicator.

"Where is Xiao Jiu? Does she have any ideas on how to handle this? Wasn't she planning to destroy the glass globe? What is the situation now?" Xueqin couldn't help asking.

Li Tao opened her mouth as if she was about to reply them. But

the screen suddenly went black. The group of women stared with dropped jaws at the communicator as the mansion became silent.

"I already did as you requested and you know how they're doing now." Li Tao took off the communicator from her wrist leisurely. She crushed it gently between her fingers, turning it to powder which scattered to the ground. "What do you plan to do now?" she said with a smile while looking at Lin Sanjiu.

Lin Sanjiu pursed her lips. When she first heard Li Tao's astounding 'confession', anger and shock assaulted her like a raging tsunami. But, for some reasons, after she heard about her companions situation, those emotions ebbed and she was left with a clear, calm rationality.

Regardless, she was only left with one route now.

"I have some questions which I wish you could clarify." When Lin Sanjiu spoke, even Li Tao was a little surprised by her composure.

The latter immediately smiled, "Go ahead. If I can answer them, I definitely will."

"First, what is the purpose of your experiment? It can't be that you just want to watch people die, right?"

Although it was just the first question, the other party frowned as if she had some trouble answering and hesitated for quite some time.

"Um... To keep it brief, I suppose I could call the experiment 'A Test For Human Recyclability'. Look," she placed her finger on the glass and tapped the area with the view of the city, "The current state of Garden of Eden is a clear display of Gresham's law. Objectively speaking, there is only garbage here."

Lin Sanjiu sensed strongly that when Li Tao used the word 'garbage', the woman truly did not attach any emotion to it, Li Tao seemed to really treat it as if she was stating a fact.

"You're hot-blooded, righteous... but still full of flaws. However,

you are still some distance from being garbage. You might despise and hate the residents of Garden of Eden, but you are essentially no different from those people down below."

Lin Sanjiu was offended but she tried her best to ignore those negative feelings and continued listening.

"If you become my test subject, I can make you become garbage like them within a year. Oh! I am not intentionally insulting you, and I don't look down on you either. This also applies to me," Li Tao also said mollifyingly, as if she meant no harm.

"This is human nature, after all. A true apocalypse does not refer to the end of humanity," said the woman indifferently. "Instead, an apocalypse occurs precisely because humanity is in its golden age—or should I say—every world that undergoes a doomsday scenario is treating itself... to plunge all living humans into misery is a necessary process it has to experience to get rid of the cancer called humans. I have wandered through various apocalyptic worlds over these few decades and one thing had been emphasized over and over again through my experiences: humans will go extinct soon or later, like dinosaurs. If so, is there anything about them worth saving or preserving? After observing this large-scale experiment for 59 years, I still haven't found a single thing."

Li Tao turned around and St. Peter took two steps forward as if he understood what she wanted, "Let me introduce my creation. Using genetic engineering and synthetic biology—NeuMensh."

Under the faint moonlight pouring through the window, St. Peter looked taller than before. His almond-shaped head was embellished by two suspended black eyes and his nose was only two small round holes. He looked like a human, but if one stared long enough into his tar-black eyes, a human would feel his terrifyingly calm aura—an inhuman aura which held an inexplicable depth.

"They are usually not aggressive unless I give them a command."

Li Tao assured Lin Sanjiu after noticing her nervousness. "I hope that they will replace humans and populate every planet."

"You gave a more detailed answer than I expected." Lin Sanjiu steadied her heartbeat and watched as St. Peter returned to his previous position. Despite his stature, he walked noiselessly, almost—Lin Sanjiu thought—like a cat.

To Lin Sanjiu, things were pretty straightforward. The woman in front of her was undoubtedly a crazy misanthropist.

The moon which hung behind the clouds was like melting ice, growing thinner and fainter by the minute in the dark blue sky. As the sun had not risen over the horizon yet, the moment before daybreak was dark without the illumination of the moon.

The only light left in the night sky was from the stars, which cast a white reflection on the glass wall of the top level of the tower. The conversation of both women who stood by the glass wall had already lasted for some time.

Lin Sanjiu, who was still pale after being bombarded by a massive amount of unsettling information, spent a considerable effort to recover her normal breathing pattern. After that, she tossed a glance at Li Tao and suddenly laughed, "One last question. Li Tao is not your real name, right. So, what should I call you?"

"You can call me... Nüwa[1]." The woman by the window replied mildly. Using this name was not an exaggeration. Her ability to create life was definitely within the realm of divinity.

[Your opponent is a 'goddess'...] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself vacuously.

"Nüwa," Lin Sanjiu parroted and nodded. "Could you also get Mr. St. Peter to give me a cup of tea? This night had been quite tumultuous and I really feel a little thirsty."

Nüwa probably didn't expect Lin Sanjiu's request. She hesitated for a while and turned to look at St. Peter. The strange, tall and

silent creature seemed to comprehend her gaze. He turned and walked to the back of the hall. After a few minutes, he returned with a cup of tea.

A pleasant aroma rose with the steam from the cup of hot tea, wafting between St. Peter's long fingers. Lin Sanjiu swallowed a mouthful of saliva and thanked the creature before she reached for the cup.

Just when she was about to touch the cup, Lin Sanjiu gathered her strength and thrust the tea cup toward St. Peter. Hot tea and the cup's porcelain fragments flew into the air, while Lin Sanjiu aimed her hidden fist at the creature's head.

St. Peter appeared taken aback and curled his body awkwardly. Lin Sanjiu's attack missed. He unwound his weird body midair, which was now in the shape of a measuring tape. Yet, he did not retaliate even after he landed on the ground.

"What are you doing?" Nüwa asked with a voice that was neither too loud or too soft. This stopped Lin Sanjiu from impulsively rushing forward with her attacks. "Do you think that St. Peter doesn't know how to defend himself without my command?"

That was exactly Lin Sanjiu's thoughts. Lin Sanjiu grimaced inwardly, blaming herself for her wishful thinking. Since the circumstances were already as such, she decided to be forthcoming about her intentions, "Sorry, but I have no interest in your plans. However, for the safety of my companions and the Posthumans who will come here in the future, the Garden of Eden cannot continue to exist. If I can't destroy the protective shield in one go, I will break it down bit by bit. If you guys try to stop me, I will just have to deal with all of you first."

She clenched both her fists tightly, she had already activated her [Mosaic Censorship] and her [Tape recorder] was now by her feet.

Lin Sanjiu didn't expect Nüwa to react with a scoffing laugh.

"Sure," Nüwa replied in a friendly tone, "You can try."

The wall behind her suddenly slid open, revealing four niches. One of these was empty, while three tall creatures, similar to St. Peter, stepped out from the remaining three.

"If you can defeat this first batch of 'Projection Trial Models', I will tell you the method to disable the radiation shield." Nüwa placed her right hand over her left one, casually, while she eyed Lin Sanjiu silently. Lin Sanjiu's forehead was now covered with cold sweat.

Chapter 151: That's the Legendary Crappy Teammate

"This life-form exceeds current humans in every way."

When Nüwa's words rang out in Lin Sanjiu's mind once again, Aristotle's two long left arms, with more than ten joints each, extended out like two living whips. They headed rapidly toward Lin Sanjiu. Although the "Neuhumes" were not aggressive, their combat situational awareness was even superior to that of many experienced Posthumans. Lin Sanjiu bent forward, planning to dodge the attack, but she realized that her enemy had a unique body structure, so the movement would be futile against the enemy's sweeping attack.

Just when the two arms were right in front of her face, she dropped to the ground and rolled away, evading the attack. She felt a slight scrape on her scalp. The wave of air current which followed Aristotle's attack was so strong that it cut off a few locks of her hair.

[How much strength is required for that phenomenon?]

Before she could get up from the ground, another shadow slid to her side. It aimed a kick at her abdomen but Lin Sanjiu quickly countered with both of her hands, hoping that she would turn his leg into a mushy pulp first. However, Montesquieu suddenly made a short, sharp screech. St. Peter reacted by retracting his joints. With this maneuver that no human could ever replicate, it avoided Lin Sanjiu's hand.

This was a one against four battle. Her opponents were not only intelligent, strong and agile, but their teamwork was also impeccable. After exchanging a few blows, Lin Sanjiu's left arm was already wounded. She held her arm and put some distance between them and herself in a rather unglamorous manner. This was the same scenario she saw in the pocket dimension.

Nüwa left early, in the start of the fight. According to her, Lin Sanjiu only needed to incapacitate them to know the method to destroy the radiation shield. "Isn't this a little too hard?" Lin Sanjiu mumbled to herself before leaping up into the air. An attack hit the spot she was standing just before. Concrete sprayed everywhere and white smoke rose from the ground—the attack missed. Laozi, who had somehow got behind Lin Sanjiu, drew his arms back slowly.

Lin Sanjiu knew that she had no chance of winning if she relied on hand-to-hand combat. She remembered that there were still quite a few descriptions of pretty good abilities in her [Tape recorder]—but it was too late.

After the lightning-fast exchange of blows, Lin Sanjiu had retreated backward a few times. Now, St. Peter and Montesquieu were standing between her and her tape recorder. If she looked past their long, lanky calves, she could still make out where the tape recorder was. [It's good that they still haven't notice that—] Just when that thought flashed through Lin Sanjiu's mind, Aristotle walked in from another direction. He looked at the metal knick-knack and gently nudged the tape recorder with the tip of his toes.

Although Nüwa had pointed out that their intelligence was comparable to that of humans, it was a fact that they did not have the same life experiences that humans had, and this was also not Earth. To these 'sages', the tape recorder was a novel item that they had never seen before.

Lin Sanjiu gulped as she could only watch as Aristotle used the hand of his left secondary arm to pick up the tape recorder. His mouth seemed to be creating some sort of low-frequency sound wave. Lin Sanjiu tried her best to listen but she couldn't hear a thing.

On the other hand, the other three Neuhumes certainly heard him. St. Peter kept watch on Lin Sanjiu to prevent her from

attacking the others, while the rest of the creatures stuck their faces close to the tape recorder. They sniffed it and examined it from all angles, almost as if they were discussing and trying to determine what it was.

Lin Sanjiu felt her heart in her throat. If they destroyed her tape recorder, her chance of winning would effectively fall to zero. Yet, she really didn't have the courage to snatch it from them because she was afraid that if her opponents knew how important it was to her, they would immediately destroy it.

The tall creature with the name "Laozi" marked on his neck started vibrating his mouth rapidly, saying some unknown language as he held the tape recorder in his eyes. Next, Lin Sanjiu stared helplessly as he pressed the 'erase' button.

The tape recorder made a buzzing sound as the recordings were slowly erased from the cassette tape. For a moment, Lin Sanjiu felt as though her heart was about to explode. Without thinking, she shouted "No!" Then, she rushed forward and swung her mouthpart weapon at the creatures' heads.

St. Peter was apparently prepared. He raised two arms and grabbed onto Lin Sanjiu's weapon and stopped its thrust. Although his light-green skin was very strong and durable, it was still cut by the sharp teeth of the weapon. His transparent blood dripped from his small wounds.

Lin Sanjiu pulled her weapon backward with all her strength and realized that it wouldn't budge. She left the weapon alone and decided to just aim for his back. However, something extraordinary happened. Laozi turned to look at her. He cocked his head and pressed the 'stop' button.

The tape recorder became silent. It stopped. At that instant, the four tall 'sages' looked down at Lin Sanjiu who was so stunned that she didn't know what to do. No one moved.

It definitely wasn't a coincidence that Laozi stopped the tape

recorder. When he heard Lin Sanjiu, it was clear from the look of his deep eyes that a thought was in his mind.

[Did he want to use it as a bargaining chip? Is he going to threaten me? Was he afraid of some sort of repercussion?] Countless thoughts ran through Lin Sanjiu's confused mind in that split second.

Laozi took the tape recorder, eyed Lin Sanjiu and bent down. Then, he placed it in front of Lin Sanjiu.

"Yours," he enunciated. It appeared to be a difficult task for him to create that sound.

Lin Sanjiu looked up at the sages that surrounded her, and she took back her tape recorder blankly.

After she retrieved her tape recorder, the four tall creatures immediately backed away in a defensive manner. From the looks of it, they must have guessed that metal knick-knack was important to Lin Sanjiu because it was powerful.

The cold sensation from the metallic surface of the tape recorder was fading away due to the warmth from Lin Sanjiu's hands. "Humans would be ashamed of their existence if they were to compare themselves to them..." Almost out of nowhere, Lin Sanjiu suddenly remembered the words Nüwa said to her before.

Nüwa ordered the four Neuhumes to fight together against Lin Sanjiu. Apart from that order, their actions were all based on their own decisions.

Lin Sanjiu finally acted. She backed away and created distance between herself and her opponents again. She suddenly exhaled deeply and laughed bitterly.

"How could there be such a stupid creature?" she mumbled to herself. "If this is the case, I could just trick them and win easily."

Though she might not be the brightest bulb in the box, she already thought of a few ideas. For example, she could make a

request for them to stop the fight and sneak an attack when they let their guard down. Another method was to find some excuse to leave, and when they returned to their rooms, she could kill them at one go, using whatever means pleased her.

[Cheating is an innate skill that all humans have.] Lin Sanjiu felt for a second something similar to Nüwa's laughter in her mind.

"Damn it," Lin Sanjiu gritted her teeth and pressed down on the 'play' button. "I can win even if I fight fair!"

If her opponents were humans, she wouldn't mind using some trickery; but fighting against this Neuhumes made Lin Sanjiu reluctant to display any behavior that would prove that Nüwa's hypothesis was right.

Lin Sanjiu was unsure what ability she would gain. Other than Lin Sanjiu's ideas, her companions could only briefly hint what the powers were. If they elaborated further, it would activate her Pygmalion Choker and the ability would be wasted.

A familiar voice she hadn't heard for a long time came from the tape recorder. It was Hu Changzai. Lin Sanjiu held back her emotions as she listened to his words silently.

"Xiao Jiu, I suddenly thought of this idea. Perhaps, it could be very useful!" He was still a bit long-winded. "You know I have allergies right? When triggered, I really can't do anything... Your new ability would be to make your designated target enemy sneeze non-stop!"

Touching her Pygmalion Choker, which was gradually growing warmer under the bandages of her neck, she was flabbergasted. If Hu Changzai was in front of her now, she would beat him up on the spot.

[Who knows if these Neuhumes even sneeze?!] She looked over at the four silent figures. She already had her answer.

Chapter 152: The Break of Dawn

Aliba stood in a beautiful and luxurious reception room, he was a frequent visitor of this place. He had been here multiple times with his colleagues from the Police and Military Department. The rich owner of the mansion would always sit on the sofa opposite him with a figure-four crossed leg position. He would never look at the gifts presented to him, but instead constantly berated his men with spittle flying everywhere. Among the men he reprimanded, Aliba was always the person who displayed the best attitude and always seemed the most ardent.

However, everything would change after tonight... Aliba stepped on a blood-soaked rug on the ground. Dark blood seeped out from the rug with a squelch.

"They did a great job here," he surveyed the blood-covered walls of the mansion contented and laughed, "I think those female mutates really hate us. Hahaha!"

His vice-chief looked a little pale but also laughed and responded with a few quips. After that, he activated his communicator and reported, "Chief, our men received a police report."

"Oh? What is it about?" Aliba asked casually as he took out a medium strength cigarette from the desk in the reception room.

"A servant working for the Head of the Technology Department reported the crime. He reported that the female mutates involved in the current insurgence broke into his master's mansion and killed that man... Hehe!" When he said this, the vice-chief couldn't hold back his laughter.

Aliba paused for two seconds with the cigarette sticking from his mouth before he looked at his watch, "The last team of female mutates have already been out for 30 minutes... Good. Get that subordinate of yours to inform the witness that our crime suppression team is on its way. If we want to stir public

sentiments, we should start now." He lit his cigarette and smiled menacingly, "Now is the time. The time to get rid of them. We will use all that equipment developed by the lab!"

"Ah, okay!" the vice-chief stood in a daze for a second before he understood. He turned and ran out to execute the order.

The last list of targets actually included the names of some inconsequential people. Due to Aliba's cautious nature, he did not want to risk taking on a few dozen female posthumans at the same time, even if his men outnumbered them. He split them into teams and sent them out only to weaken their strength.

Beforehand, he already had 400 soldiers on standby. When they received his order, it took less than five minutes for them to surround the mansion where Xueqin's group was in.

Meanwhile, the group had their misgivings after the screen of their communicator went black. After a short discussion, as per Xueqin's suggestion, they quickly contacted their other companions and informed them about the incident briefly. However, no one could think of any good idea on how to deal with that situation.

"Let's not think about that first, you guys should hurry back to the city hall." The last person the group contacted was Gong Daoyi, "I already urged the others to return, but no one is back yet. I am a little worried... huh?"

Over the screen, he suddenly frowned and stared at the flash of light coming from behind the women. He immediately shouted, "Dodge to the side!"

As it was so sudden, none of them really had time to think. Their bodies instinctive reacted quicker than their minds—two of the women and an escort jumped aside, leaving the spot they were standing. This was quickly followed by a loud boom. The accompanying shockwave hit them like a tsunami, slamming them against the wall.

The explosion created a rain of concrete, steel and wood, and these fragments created a second round of attacks. As a cloud of smoke and dust surrounded them, Xueqin, with her face covered in blood, coughed and quickly summoned out her mushroom. It was because of that protection that she had some remaining strength to survey her surroundings. The dust and smoke blurred her vision. She could only make out the silhouette of a person lying on the floor at the other end of the room. However, she had no clue about the person's condition.

The spot where they had gathered previously received the greatest damage; it was nothing but a pile of rubble now. Suddenly, Xueqin noticed some movements from under the rubble. Dong Haohao, who was covered in dust, wriggled out from the rubble and spat out some dust from her mouth.

Even though Dong Haohao was caught right in the epicenter of the explosion, she was unharmed because she managed to activate her [National Tax agency]. She took a quick look at her wrist and suddenly made a despondent comment, "I was too slow. The communicator has been damaged."

The escort also recovered from the blast that had thrown him towards the entrance. He sifted through the rubble and pulled Bai Xiaoke and Xu Wei. Other than Xu Wei, who was now unconscious because of her head injury, the remaining women were not badly wounded.

The wall with the window, through where the attack came, was already nowhere to be seen. The women looked outside and saw the large group of soldiers.

"When did they..." Bai Xiaoke gulped.

The women were on the second floor, not far from the ground; without the wall, the two parties could see each other very clearly. The soldiers at the front looked upwards at the women. Their eyes were emotionless as if they were looking at those hardy

cockroaches found in some homes. A man who seemed like the team leader made a gesture, "They're not dead. Take aim and fire again."

The two soldiers beside him bent down to fiddle with a colorful, cute pink human-sized robotic doll. The doll seemed to be an immobile robot, as it maintained an unchanging bubble-blowing pose. "Quick, let's get out of here!" Xueqin shouted urgently. They didn't waste any time. The escort quickly carried Xu Wei with one arm and all of them ran out of the bedroom. The explosive force of the previous attack was limited, so it only ruined the bedroom. The beautiful mahogany staircase, with its shiny finish, was still in a perfect condition.

The entire compound of the mansion had been surrounded by soldiers, so the women knew that they could only hide for some time. There was no one on the ground floor. The lights were switched off and the doors and windows were locked.

Bai Xiaoke let out a heavy sigh, "Can all of you still fight—"

Before she could finish a sentence, she felt a light breeze on the back of her neck. She turned stiffly and saw a few transparent soap bubbles following behind them. The bubbles floated down the stairs, but not at a slow speed. At least, they were the source of the breeze in the stale living room.

"They're gonna explode!" Dong Haohao roared angrily. When the bubbles burst, Xueqin's mushroom popped up at the same time. The mushroom was destroyed into small bits in mere seconds but managed to shield the team from the explosion. Xueqin vomited a mouthful of blood but no one else was injured.

Just when they sighed a collective breath of relief, the men outside were back in action. After a series of banging sounds, the front door started shaking violently. It barely survived a few attacks before it swung wide open.

A large number of fully armored soldiers flooded like a violent

tide with their heavy weapons. Facing an army of a few hundred, even a posthuman's best option was to flee.

"I guess we're dying here," Dong Haohao used her [National Tax agency] to nullify a beam of laser shot at them. Sweat appeared on her face as she said, "Let's drag down as many as we can!"

Since they had all recognized that there was no chance of surviving, they abandoned all restraints. With the protection of Dong Haohao's [National Tax agency], the women rushed into the middle of the group of soldiers, disregarding the gunfire; it was as if every cell in their bodies had a screaming thirst for their enemies' blood. Wherever they went, severed limbs flew everywhere like a spurting water fountain.

As they were already driven by a crazy bloodlust, they did not realize that their actions actually helped them gain more time for survival. Since the women thrust themselves into the crowd of soldiers, the soldiers did not dare to carelessly shoot at them, as they feared hurting their own colleagues.

Bai Xiaoke received a direct attack on her back. It hurt so much that tears spilled from her eyes instantly. She panted heavily and stabbed the person behind her with her knife. Her vision was starting to blur. She felt drained, as if she was on her last bit of strength. Her field of sight began to falter like the shaky ground beneath her. Her legs weakened and she nearly fell.

[Is this the end for me?]

She steadied herself in a daze and realized that the soldiers around her were also trying to maintain their balance. As they had not evolved, they had a poor sense of balance, so most of them quickly fell on the ground.

A deep rumbling sound came from the far horizon. It was the faint sound of explosions in the sky, like an endless roll of thunder in a summer night. For a moment, the mind-numbing loud noise filled their ears.

The ground resonated with the sounds of explosion and started shaking noisily, as if it had been placed on vibration mode. Startled, everyone stopped. The vibrations became more and more intense, to such a point that not even the posthumans could maintain their balance. The robotic doll had already been tipped to its side due to the quake. The leader of the soldiers crouched on the ground with his subordinates' protection. He looked up and shouted something. However, his voice was swallowed by the thunderous noise, so it appeared as if he was just opening and closing his mouth.

Bai Xiaoke stepped over the humans on the ground and scrambled out of the front door. When she looked up, she was stunned.

Following which, she yelled out in the loudest voice she had ever used in her whole 20 plus life, "THE RADIATION SHIELD HAS OPENED! THE RADIATION SHIELD HAS OPENED!"

She felt her blood racing through her body, forgetting everything momentarily, she continued yelling out those words. The thunder-like noise finally faded. The residents of Garden of Eden turned pale when they stared up into the sky above them. They could still hear the high-pitched female voice in their ears— "THE RADIATION SHIELD HAS OPENED!"

A piece of the glass globe slowly retracted into a second piece of glass, and then another, until the entire glass globe rapidly disappeared into the ground. For the first time in decades, the dark blue sky on the brink of dawn hung over the city without any barriers. The strange-smelling contaminated air from the outside world swept through the city like a gale, forcing itself through every person's nose cavity.

That odor, which couldn't even be entirely blocked out by the radiation shield previously, made a point extremely clear to every single person: whatever scrappy means of anti-radiation that Garden of Eden possessed stood no chance against the horrifying

levels of radiation outside.

This was a stench of death and the smell of rebirth. Meanwhile, a hint of marble-white light seeped from the eastern horizon.

Chapter 153: What Kind of Shitty Method Is That?

The air was contaminated with the smell of rotting plants and the fishy stench from all sorts of mutated creatures. It flowed through the respiratory tracts and into the lungs of all the humans and posthumans in the city.

Under such circumstances, no one uttered a word even when they saw those wanted criminals, the female posthumans, running past them. Hundreds or even thousands of humans sprawled on the streets like dead bodies. Their almost-dead listless eyes trailed the nimble footsteps of the posthumans until finally revealing a tinge of envy.

Blood gushed out from their respiratory tract, making it impossible to breathe, yet they no longer had the strength to even cough. Occasionally, a few people would appear with milder radiation sickness. They would stumble through the streets covered with the bodies of the fallen and shout out "save me" before collapsing to the ground like toy blocks.

There were victims everywhere.

The soldiers who were fighting the women just moments before had already abandoned their mission and dispersed, trying to find a way to survive. Their anti-radiation suits were quite effective, so they were given a little more time to live. Xueqin and the others were wounded and soaked in blood, but they couldn't care less. They ran through the streets and alleys and called out for other possible surviving posthumans.

Facing death, all the residents finally went mad. Every now and then, a man would appear holding a knife and an ax, brawling and screaming while he chopped up any living thing he saw. The people who hid in their anti-radiation shelters had already lost their sanity, crying loudly non-stop. A group of soldiers who were

previously fighting against the female posthumans headed for the laboratories. They raided the place for medicines, burning some of the labs in the process. Some researchers, still wearing their white coats, hung limply from the walls of the laboratories like beefy jerkies.

Amidst the shrieks, the crying, the call for help and the fires, far above the city, the glass window at the top floor of the black tower was blasted apart. Glass fragments fell from the sky but nobody noticed.

The surrounding sound of devastation drowned out the posthumans' calls for their companions, leaving only murmurs. Lin Sanjiu composed herself as she looked down from the top of the black tower. The walls of the tower seemed to stretch downward with no end. She felt dizzy even with a single glance.

She forced herself to stand firm and watched the city below her again. Then, she noticed a few dots, like black ants, moving quickly through the city. After a while, the dots converged and they headed toward the black tower. Judging from their speed, those were definitely posthumans. Lin Sanjiu assumed that the others probably already guessed that she had accomplished her mission when they saw the glass globe disappearing before their eyes, so they quickly re-assembled and flocked toward the black tower.

Lin Sanjiu's heart tensed up for a moment and she quickly estimated the time she had. She sighed. She had no choice. Behind her, a segment of the floor had slid away and a control desk had risen. That was the control desk which caused the disassembling of the radiation shield. The metallic support which held the console disappeared deep into the floor and there was a rope tied to it.

Lin Sanjiu looked behind her. She saw St. Peter staring at her with unblinking eyes. Nervous, she actually let out a laugh. "You went easy on me just now," she did not care whether St. Peter comprehended her words. She looked down at the three other

Neuhumes who laid unconscious on the ground. She nodded at St. Peter and said, "Bring them away. I am also leaving."

St. Peter slowly stood up and carried his companions, as if he understood what she had said. The wounds on his arms were torn open during their fight, so two of his arms were covered in blood. Blood dripped from his wounds, creating a small puddle on the floor.

Lin Sanjiu turned back and took one step closer to the edge again. Suddenly, she couldn't hear the sounds from the city below her. All she could hear was her pounding heart. She tightened the knot on her wrist and took a deep breath. She stuck the tip of her leg out —

The next second, Lin Sanjiu's body was in the air. She had leaped out from the window and was screaming involuntarily. Under the cyan skies at dawn, her body swooped downward like a small hawk. As she freefell, the few seconds of weightlessness made her feel as if her heart was about to leap out; the gushing air current caused by the air resistance hit her face and body. Her skin hurt but she was suddenly overwhelmed by a refreshing feeling from her head to the tip of her toes that she had never felt before. She made a whooping sound and then started laughing out uncontrollably.

The rope of a few hundred meters quickly reached its full length, stopping her fall rather abruptly, but Lin Sanjiu was still a few stories away from the ground. Lin Sanjiu thought quickly and converted the rope into a cord while she flexed her legs and leaped toward a nearby tree using the momentum.

There were a few cries of alarm from the ground as Lin Sanjiu grabbed onto a tree branch tightly. She swung off the excess of downward momentum before jumping down to the ground with a thud.

"It's Xiao Jiu!"

"Miss Lin jumped down from the top!"

The group of women who were still some distance away was shocked by her antics, and there was a large commotion as they quickly ran over to Lin Sanjiu. Bai Xiaoke led the group as her escort ran behind carrying Xueqin.

Lin Sanjiu caught her breath before she flashed a large grin at the people running toward her. Everyone was in quite a sorry state. All of them grinned widely showing their white teeth despite their dirty and bloodied face, to the point of making it hard to distinguish their faces. The women cheered and laughed. It was difficult for Lin Sanjiu to actually make out what the others were saying, considering the noise.

Gong Daoyi stood behind the group of ecstatic women and watched them quietly with his hands in his pockets.

"Alright, let's talk later," Lin Sanjiu gestured for the group to keep quiet. "We don't have much time now. There are only 20 minutes before this entire place is destroyed."

And indeed, after the radiation shield had been disabled, the next progression of the chain reaction was turning the city into ashes. Since Nüwa no longer wanted to continue this experiment, the humans living in Garden of Eden were naturally useless to her.

Lin Sanjiu didn't have time to explain further. They needed to search and get as many resources from this place before the self-destruction sequence started. After she briefed them quickly, the group was split into two teams and went about completing their own tasks. One team was tasked with searching food and daily necessities, while the other had to gather weapons and Special Items.

Xueqin was in the group which was now rushing to Garden of Eden Laboratories. Bai Xiaoke's escort carried her on his back while he ran beside Lin Sanjiu. After hesitating for a few seconds, Xueqin finally whispered, "What happened in the black tower?"

Where is Li Tao?"

Lin Sanjiu grimaced inward. Lin Sanjiu herself found it rather incredible that she managed to disable the radiation shield despite the perils.

At that time, when her Pygmalion Choker was activated, she was so dejected that she could pull out a clump of her hair.

[What shitty ability is this?! Can sneezing kill anyone? Is it powerful? Besides, St. Peter and the others did not have noses, they only had two nostrils!]

Even though she knew that the ability was probably useless against them, Lin Sanjiu couldn't help trying her luck and testing it on them. She tried to use the ability on all four of them at once, but they showed no reaction. They didn't even cringe their faces.

"Damn it!" she gnashed her teeth madly. "I can't believe I, Lin Sanjiu, will just die here—"

Before she completed her thought, she suddenly felt an irritation in her nose. An explosion of violent sneezes from herself interrupted her track of thought. In that split second, with her eyes closed, Lin Sanjiu was nearly hit by a sweeping punch. When she opened her eyes again, she was cursing Hu Changzai over and over again in her mind.

"So, I just have to think of a target and the person would sneeze, no matter who it was? So, when I say my name Lin Sanjiu—Achoo!"

She accidentally thought of herself again and started sneezing. She even started tearing.

"How am I supposed to fight like this?" Lin Sanjiu grumbled softly to herself. At that moment, in that state, she immediately thought of an idea. She remembered that though Nüwa could give orders to St. Peter verbally, she sometimes only had to give him a look for him to understand.

For example, Nüwa did not say anything when she wanted the neuhumes to attack Lin Sanjiu, yet they certainly received her order. Lin Sanjiu was sure it was not like in novels where people had that sort of 'tacit understanding' due to the strong rapport between them. [Could it be that Nüwa was using some sort of psychic communication?]

Lin Sanjiu jumped, dodging Aristotle's attack. The excitement of this discovery made her palms feel a little numb. If her deduction was right, she just had to stop Nüwa's psychic connection...

When she thought of this, she realized that the attacks paused for a moment.

The combined attacks from the four sages were not as well-coordinated and timed as closely as before. In fact, her opponents had missed four opportunities to attack her just now, even though it was an easy strike. Somehow, they stopped at a critical point, allowing Lin Sanjiu, with her preoccupied mind, to evade their attacks.

"Four times..." she repeated to herself, "I think I thought of Nüwa four times?"

Just when she finished mumbling to herself, she saw Montesquieu in the air, as if he was about to strike her. But, he did nothing and just landed back on the ground.

Lin Sanjiu felt an electrifying feeling throughout her body. Without really thinking it through, she started laughing loudly. "Hu Changzai. Good job! Nüwa, Nüwa, Nüwa!"

No matter how much Nüwa despised humans, she was one herself; Lin Sanjiu just needed to think about her, and no matter where she was, she would sneeze!

When humans sneezed, there was no way they could process any cognitive thought! With her thoughts interrupted, she was naturally unable to communicate and send her order

telepathically. The neuhumes would only resume attacking when Nüwa recovered and reconnected with them psychically.

A sneeze might only be very short but Lin Sanjiu could make Nüwa sneeze non-stop. When these short few seconds of sneezes where chained up to make five minutes, it didn't matter how physiologically superior or how good the neuhumes were at combat. They certainly posed no threat to her if they were not attacking.

It took a short time for Lin Sanjiu to defeat three neuhumes, except St. Peter. Then, she stopped her "sneezing attack". St. Peter looked around him and finally took out a key and inserted it into a keyhole on the floor obediently. The tile on the floor shifted and a control desk rose.

There was a screen on the control desk and when Lin Sanjiu switched on the console, the screen lit up with a 'snap'. Nüwa appeared on the screen. Her nose was red and her eyes were teary. "That's too primitive..." After a few minutes of extreme sneezing, Nüwa's deep, calculating and enigmatic image totally disappeared, she spoke nasally, "What sort of method is this?!"

"It's none of your business. It worked, right?" Lin Sanjiu replied rascally.

"Alright... Don't blame me for not saying this." Nüwa squeezed her nose, and continued with a buzzing voice, "After 25 minutes, the self-destruction sequence of this place will be initiated. If you want to escape, you better hurry."

Lin Sanjiu was a little surprised. She narrowed her eyes and asked suspiciously, "Why would you be so kind to tell me this? I'm also a human that you hate."

Nüwa placed her hand down and smiled faintly. The screen went black without warning. Nüwa left without even a single explanation.

In any case, Lin Sanjiu decided to be on the safe side and trust her words. If she had to take the stairs, it would probably take her about 20 minutes. After some consideration, she took out a climbing rope she had collected at some point in her journey and decided to bungee jump. Unbeknownst to her, when she was in midair, the screen suddenly lit up again.

"Say," Nüwa shouted over the screen with her nasal voice—St. Peter and the others walked over, as they did not know who she was speaking to, "Did you manage to get any of your cell plasma into her wound?"

The room was silent.

After a few seconds, Nüwa laughed with satisfaction.

Chapter 154: Chicken Pie, Fruit Juice, Bread and Beer

The total destruction of Garden of Eden took a full five days. When Lin Sanjiu and her group climbed up a mountain, they could still vaguely see the pillars of smoke rising to the sky. After a few days, the thick steely-gray smoke pervaded the entire city and even swallowed up the small area of sky above. The radioactive clouds which hung in the sky seemed mild compared to the rolling columns of thick smoke filled with ashes and burning debris. All the buildings once under the glass globe were designed by Nüwa. When the nest overturns, no egg remains intact. Likewise, everything was destroyed.

The strong wind, accompanied by an unpleasant stench, bellowed, tossing everybody's hair. The group gazed at that spot far away, and finally, someone spoke.

"They deserved it," a girl whose name Lin Sanjiu could not remember commented. Her face was very stiff and her tightly clenched fists were bleeding. "I'm happy that they're all dead."

Right now, there were less than twenty people traveling with Lin Sanjiu. After the multiple skirmishes with the military, they had already lost many people from their initial group of over 40. After escaping Garden of Eden, six women decided not to follow them.

"Thank you for saving us." A girl which headed with the group of six smiled sincerely, "But, we decided not to travel with you. We want to stay behind, and keep a lookout near Garden of Eden."

"Why?" Lin Sanjiu was a little shocked.

"After those people in there come in contact with radiation, there would probably be some that would evolve to become posthumans, right?" The leader of the group replied, and her nose twitched a little as she displayed some animosity, "It doesn't make sense that

they benefit from this, does it? We want to stay nearby, and kill those people if we see them."

For a second, Lin Sanjiu did not know what to say. After a while, she advised, "Some of the women from the city are very pitiful. They didn't really do anything bad..."

The leader nodded halfheartedly.

Following what they had agreed on before, Lin Sanjiu distributed a portion of the resources to them. After they camped for a night, Lin Sanjiu's group would continue their journey, but unexpectedly, before they left, the group of six brought them a gift.

"Here. We know that some of the sisters want this." The leader raised her hand and threw a big sack on the ground. "What a coincidence!"

There was a person in the net. It was the Aliba, who was barely breathing. His body was covered with wounds. He evolved after the incident—he only gained his first ability, [Radiation immunity], when he was captured by the six female posthumans who had far more experience than him.

Apart from him, the group caught some men from the laboratories, but the leader kept him for herself saying that she wanted them to "regret what they've done".

Even though Lin Sanjiu did not feel any pity for Aliba, she somehow felt that there was something wrong when she saw a few of the women in her group accepting the bundle cheerfully. At that moment, the image of Nüwa saying, "this is human nature, after all," surfaced in her mind inexplicably.

Lin Sanjiu did not sleep well the past few nights, because every time someone woke up from a nightmare, the person would 'pay a visit' to Aliba. Aliba had his bones forcibly pulled out and his groin had been trampled into a bloody mess... his painful cries were so

terrifying that they would scare a dead person back to life.

After three days of torture and beatings, Aliba finally drew the last breath he hungered for after someone stuck her finger into his boneless limbs. That was just a few minutes before. When Lin Sanjiu saw Aliba's ragdoll-like corpse being kicked down the side of the mountain, she pursed her lips. After some time, she finally sighed deeply.

"I have to look for some of my friends," she turned to the group and quickly summarized how she had accidentally offended Puppeteer and was separated from her companions. "Coming with me might be dangerous. Furthermore, I still have to spend a couple of months here in Garden of Eden. We will still have to part in the end."

Most of the other female posthumans only had one to four months left in this world. After saying their farewells, most of the people left. Lin Sanjiu turned to look at the few people who stayed.

"I'll probably be sent to another world only one month after you're gone. Anyway, I have nowhere else to go," Xueqin said stiffly. "But let me make this clear, if you want to run off and kill yourself alone again, I won't go back for you."

"She still can't move on her own. If I leave, are you going to carry her?" Bai Xiaoke said as she patted her escort's shoulder.

Remarkably, even though Hui Chuyan only had a few months left in Garden of Eden, she decided to stay behind. Xu Wei had passed away and Dong Haohao had already bid them farewell, yet Lin Sanjiu was surprised to find that Gong Daoyi was still with them. She had her suspicions and doubts about the man but after she found out that he saved the group of women when they were in a crisis, she couldn't help feeling grateful. Thus, she asked him politely, "Mr. Gong, do you want to travel with us?"

Gong Daoyi smiled faintly. The combination of his extremely attractive face and his smile made his appearance dazzling to say

the least. "I stayed behind because I wanted to give this to you," he said with his gentle voice. After that, he handed a paper crane to Lin Sanjiu. The paper crane looked very familiar to Lin Sanjiu, she remembered she had seen that once before. When she was trapped in the ocean bed, Hai Tianqing and the others met a girl called 'Sayo', who then helped them send a paper crane like this to her.

"I know you are going to look for a Consular Officer next," Gong Daoyi said unhurriedly. "We can split up. If we find a Consular Officer, we can inform each other with this. What do you think about that?"

Lin Sanjiu was pleasantly surprised by this: [He's resourceful. If he's willing to help, it will definitely improve our chances!]

Gong Daoyi still had five months left in this world. After the two agreed on the arrangements, he taught Lin Sanjiu how to use the crane. Then, he told them to look after themselves, and Lin Sanjiu thanked him earnestly before he left.

The women also set off again.

"Really. How can such a good-looking man exist?" Bai Xiaoke mumbled to herself knowing that Gong Daoyi couldn't hear them. "Did you see his skin? It is flawless! And those eyes..."

Xueqin rolled her eyes, finding it an embarrassment to even respond. Hui Chuyan simply followed behind Lin Sanjiu. When she heard Bai Xiaoke's comment, she chuckled. She turned to Lin Sanjiu, and unconsciously used a reliant tone to ask the latter, "Sister Lin, how should we even begin to look for a Consular Officer in this vast wide world?"

Her question was right on the money. Lin Sanjiu didn't know either.

When she arrived in this world, she was quickly kidnapped and sent to Garden of Eden so she didn't really know anything about this outside world filled with radiation, much less about where

posthumans congregated there. She didn't even know which direction to head to if they wanted to go to the house where she was first tricked by the fat man.

Among them, Xueqin was a newbie to this; Bai Xiaoke, like Lin Sanjiu, had only experienced one Grade E New World; even though Hui Chuyan was quite experienced, she wasn't really all that reliable as she survived all this time depending on her sister.

Lin Sanjiu pondered for a moment and suddenly remembered something. "I have a Special Item. It might bring us to a place where there are people," she said hesitantly before she looked at the other women with a guarded look, "But let me say something, I don't want to see any of you even hide a smile."

The others didn't know how to react to Lin Sanjiu's absurd request. While everyone gave her a puzzled look, Lin Sanjiu reverted her [Dog's Frisbee] card to its original form and slowly placed it in her mouth.

[Dog's Frisbee]: No matter how far an owner throws this frisbee, a dog can always bring it back... Does anyone find that amazing? Why won't the dog lose its way? The answer lies in the frisbee!

This frisbee would direct the user back to the location where the corresponding geographical marker—most likely Er Dao's base—had been set. Once she bit the frisbee in her mouth, the row of LED lights on the front-left lit. "Let's go in that direction," Lin Sanjiu said indistinctly while she pointed at the direction where the LED lights lit.

[It's okay. They're not going to laugh—] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself.

"Haha haha haha!" Xueqin suddenly burst into laughter without holding back, "So, are you the dog?!" Her laughter broke Bai Xiaoke's and Hui Chuyan's self-control.

"Please lead us to your owner!" Bai Xiaoke added.

At that moment, Lin Sanjiu really missed the days when she traveled alone.

The only person who somewhat treated the matter ‘gently’ was Hui Chuyan. She wiped her tears and tried to smooth things over, "Alright, alright. Sister Lin, just lead the way. We will follow you."

Lin Sanjiu wore a glum expression and said nothing—it wasn’t like she could speak easily—and walked in front of the group. Every now and then, they would see gruesome, puke-inducing creatures crawling out from the blackish soil on the ground (which seemed soaked with blood). Weird sickly green plants swayed in the breeze tinged with a stench; lead grey clouds hung low in the sky, blocking the view of the sun even though it was daytime.

As far as they could see, there was only the wilderness and the occasional crumbling, dilapidated ruins.

None of them expected that they would actually walk for a whole month. The air was so saturated with radiation it was as if they could feel it clinging to their skins like something tangible. Without Anti-radiation Gummi Candies, it was almost impossible for even posthumans to continue walking under such conditions.

Considering their speed, they could cover an entire middle-sized country within a month. However, the geographical marker that Er Dao set up was extremely far. The led lights on the frisbee shone brightly, indicating that the women were still quite some distance away from their final destination.

To be honest, Lin Sanjiu’s cheeks were aching.

"Let’s rest here today," Lin Sanjiu pulled out the frisbee from her mouth and sat down on a clean rock, panting. As she did not have any radiation immunity, she survived by drawing out radiation from her body into her Nostradamus’s Card. As a result, the journey took a greater toll on her body than the others and she got exhausted more easily. "It’s odd. We didn’t see even one other person all this time."

Xueqin had already long recovered. She took off her backpack swiftly and took out some food. "They probably saw four of us, so they might have avoid us, not wanting to find trouble," she answered Lin Sanjiu while she handed out some chicken pies.

Naturally, the chicken pies were all salvaged from Garden of Eden. As they were all vacuum-packed, they could still last for some time. Lin Sanjiu took a pie from Xueqin and took a large bite. The smell of tender chicken meat mixed with spices rushed into her nose.

The chicken pies smelled delicious and a nice aroma wafted out once their packagings were torn open. This often drew out unwanted pests like large insects and some sort of rodent—just like today. The women had only taken a few bites when they heard a soft rustling sound from the nearby bushes.

"Whose turn is it this time?" Bai Xiaoke asked with a muffled voice while her mouth was stuffed.

When she heard this, Hui Chuyan stood up on her own initiative and sighed, "I hope it is a mammal, bugs are so gross..."

The sound of her footsteps drifted away while the three women took little notice as Xueqin began taking out some packets of juice, compressed bread and beer.

"Don't we have some leftover egg jerky from the previous time? It tastes good, take it out—" Before Bai Xiaoke finished her sentence, they suddenly heard a strange gasp, as if someone shouted but her voice was abruptly cut off.

All of them quickly stood up, spilling their beers as they looked behind. Hui Chuyan, who was perfectly fine just moments before, was now standing inexplicably behind an iron railing. She looked terrified as she held onto the railings.

[Why is there an iron railing out here in the wilderness?]

Strangely, there was only one single iron railing. From the first

look, it seemed as if Hui Chuyan could just walk out from the side of the railing. However, she didn't do that and instead she perspired anxiously as she banged on the railing, unable to get out.

"A posthuman did this!" Lin Sanjiu's heart sank as she dragged back the two other women who were about to rush forward.

Chapter 155: From Heaven Fell a Sister Lin

Dark clouds loomed over an endless horizon. There were only patches of a sort of ugly knee-height bushes a few kilometers around them, which rustled noisily in the wind. Most of the man-made infrastructures had already been destroyed by nature with a vengeance. The occasional rusty skeleton of what had once been a traffic light would evoke a vague feeling along the lines of "Oh, so there was a road here decades ago".

Lin Sanjiu and her companions surveyed their bare surroundings many times but were simply unable to find a place where the person that ambushed them could have hidden.

[Could he be lying flat in the bushes?] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself though it was a little hard to imagine that possibility.

Lin Sanjiu whispered to Xueqin, "Don't you have that—"

Though Lin Sanjiu spoke vaguely, Xueqin immediately understood what she meant.

She took out a packet of dry noodles and a small Swiss knife without any hesitation. Using the knife, she quickly cut the noodle in half and stuffed it back. Then, she swung her hand and multiple whip-like shadows flew out from her wrist with a whoosh and hit the bushes with smackings sounds. The noodles swept across the bushes violently and many plants were destroyed instantly. Leaves fluttered as all kinds of disgusting creatures crawled out from the bushes. But, there was no sign of any humans.

"No matter how many times I see you using your weird ability, I just can't get used to it." Bai Xiaoke mumbled and called out an escort.

A muscular male escort appeared, wearing only a pair of beach shorts. He walked cautiously toward the iron railing.

"How's your man-crazy ability any better?" Xueqin couldn't help

retorting while she continued to search through the bushes.

They seemed to have developed a fluent pattern of communication which involved both of them just bickering.

Xueqin swept through most of the bushes but there was no one in sight. Seeing her companions trying their best to help her, Hui Chuyan seemed even more worried. The women could see her opening and closing her mouth, as if speaking, but they couldn't hear a single word from her.

"It seems like it even blocks off sound," Lin Sanjiu commented quietly. Her expression remained unchanged but she raised her voice so that it could be heard from a distance, "Who are you? What do you want from us? Why don't you speak?"

Xueqin and Bai Xiaoke threw her a glance without thinking. They knew all along that Lin Sanjiu was someone that could stay calm during a crisis. However, this was the first time both women saw her with such a composed expression—no, composed wasn't the right word to use here.

When Lin Sanjiu asked those questions, her voice sounded unexpectedly flat, as if she didn't really find the situation that serious.

[If I have to describe... it feels like Lin Sanjiu is acting like a gamer—] Xueqin frowned and thought to herself.

"Don't waste your time, you guys can't find me!" A hoarse voice that sounded like a male duck quacking suddenly rang out and interrupted Xueqin's train of thought. "You've trespassed on my boss' territory! Do you think you can just leave like that?"

[It is good that someone replied and that person doesn't sound too hard to deal with—] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself. The women were relieved to hear an answer, at least for the time being.

Lin Sanjiu quickly regained her usual countenance and slightly smiled, "Tell me what you want, we'll see." As she spoke, she

walked two steps forward, seemingly unintentionally, and examined the iron railing trapping Hui Chuyan.

The Quacker stopped—he seemed to be using some sort of method which made it impossible to find him from his voice; when he spoke, it was as if his voice was coming from all directions. He spoke again, "Easy. Leave all your food and go."

Even though Xueqin was carrying a hiking backpack with a lot of food, most of their food had been converted to cards and were with Lin Sanjiu. Even if they left behind the food in the backpack, it wasn't a great loss for them.

Seeing Lin Sanjiu nodding to her, Xueqin threw her backpack angrily onto the ground before she shouted, holding back her anger, "Happy? Let our friend go now!"

The Quacker kept quiet as if considering something, leaving only the sound of the wind blowing. After some time, he questioned slowly, "You have four people, and you only have one bag? I told you to leave all your food here, and you guys agreed so easily? I think you people have some way to hide and store your things."

Indeed, people who could survive an apocalypse were not that simple-minded. Lin Sanjiu knew that she was a little careless this time, but she didn't show it on her face. Instead, she replied naturally, "Any amount of food can't compare with the safety of our companion. Let me offer you an advice. You better quit while you're ahead. You can always find more food... But if you don't let our friend go, don't blame us for using force."

The Quacker didn't speak, he was clearly contemplating what to do next. After all, he was against several opponents. No matter how great the allure of food was, he couldn't help thinking about the risks.

Lin Sanjiu walked around the iron railing and even tried to touch Hui Chuyan from behind. However, even though there seemed to be nothing behind the girl, Lin Sanjiu couldn't reach her no matter

how far she stretched her arms, she couldn't even touch a corner of her clothes.

It felt as if Hui Chuyan was trapped in a sort of isolated space. The iron railing was merely a part of the person's ability and not something 'real' because Lin Sanjiu couldn't convert it into a card and couldn't use her [Mosaic Censorship] to blast it apart either. When she was at her wits' end, the Quacker suddenly spoke with clenched teeth, "I'm not being greedy! But that little bit of food is not sufficient for us. Just hand me... hand me one month worth of food. I'll let her go!"

[That isn't going to happen.] Lin Sanjiu thought.

"Think of a way to distract him, I will try to look for him." Lin Sanjiu whispered while she edged towards the two women.

Bai Xiaoke immediately had an idea once she heard what Lin Sanjiu said. She made a realistic-looking worried expression, "Hey bro... our food is with that girl. If you don't let her go, we will have nothing to eat, and neither will you."

Xueqin quickly added, "That's right! That's why we need her back no matter what! Right?"

Xueqin's explanation seemed more plausible to the Quacker than Lin Sanjiu's 'friendship' talk. He was momentarily stumped, he could neither believe them nor ignore what they said.

"How would I know if you're telling me the truth?" the Quacker asked cautiously with a sort of girlish precaution.

When Xueqin and Bai Xiaoke heard him, they continued trying to convince him for some time. Meanwhile, Lin Sanjiu was making a gesture with her hand silently.

"Try to talk to him a little longer." Lin Sanjiu urged very softly

Words appeared on the white card she hid in hand: "This ability has not reached the next level. This is the maximum level of details that will be provided." She was holding her diary card.

Sometimes when her diary card recorded something, it would add some small details. For example, the super cute girl looks very happy; Chen Jinfeng schemes at his desk; every time Gong Daoyi speaks, the girls blush. The number of details was limited by Lin Sanjiu level, thus these minute details were not provided all the time.

However, Lin Sanjiu deduced something interesting about her ability: her diary card only reported facts, thus it's not affected by forms of deception.

This time, the words wrote: "A coarse male voice rang out from above."

[So, that's why we couldn't find him...]

"So, I have to fly now?" Lin Sanjiu cursed quietly, "First a dog, now a bird? F*ck."

The other two women heard her mumbling and got closer to her. To the Quacker, it was like the three women were discussing something. He didn't think there was anything about that, so he just waited while he thought about the situation.

[I should have asked more people to come along—] Just when that thought flashed in his mind, the women below suddenly spoke. He immediately perked his ears to listen, but he had to reply awkwardly, "What do you say? I didn't hear you clearly. Can you speak a little louder?"

"We said..." Bai Xiaoke dragged every single word. While she spoke, Lin Sanjiu quickly climbed up the escort's shoulder. The escort half-squat and Xueqin climbed up from his knees. Luckily, both women were quite slim and the escort was strong enough, so he managed to support the two women.

"Your.... request..." Bai Xiaoke was speaking in an infuriatingly slow manner.

"Are you ready?" Lin Sanjiu asked. Xueqin nodded hastily and

carefully stood on the escort's shoulder. Once she was on the escort's shoulder, Lin Sanjiu held her ankles.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know if it was a misperception, but she felt that she had grown stronger recently. This was immediately proven the next second.

Lin Sanjiu threw Xueqin into the sky flinging her by her legs. Xueqin flew upwards like a missile. She opened her arms and multiple whip-like shadows swept past, covering a large portion of the sky.

[Is that high enough?] Lin Sanjiu looked upward but she did not really feel that worried. She didn't really feel that unsure about it.

Xueqin shouldn't be able to reach the clouds but she actually managed to hit a piece of cloud. As she fell from the sky, the cloud also fell with a terrified "ahhhhhhhhhhh" scream. The cloud fell to the ground with a plop.

Without Lin Sanjiu's instruction, the escort shot toward the large piece of cloud and pressed it down on the ground. The three women walked over to take a closer look. The piece of cloud gradually lost its shape and changed into a translucent raincoat.

A teenager was wrapped in the translucent raincoat. He was at most 18 or 19 and was struggling against the escort's grasp like a fish out of water. When he saw the three women gathering around him, he finally gave a resigned sigh, "Okay. Alright. I will let her go... don't hurt me."

Lin Sanjiu had other plans. "Didn't you say you had a boss? Who?" She frowned and questioned the teenager. Her calm demeanor had disappeared without a trace.

The teenage boy huffed two breaths before he answered reluctantly, "The few square kilometer around here all belong to my boss, Yo Daddy! Let me warn you! He thinks highly of me so you guys better let me go ASAP!"

Chapter 156: A Naming System When All Creative Juices Have Been Expended

The spilled beer seeped into the bushes and rocks. The smell of malt, alcohol, and food finally lured a black, slimy creature out from under a rock. If it weren't for the four legs which extended from its underbelly, it would look more like a fish. Its entire body was covered with black scales wrapped in a sort of slime. As it crawled through the dirt-colored bushes, it easily camouflaged into the background.

It speedily avoided the beer-soaked soil and carefully crawled toward the direction where the aroma was coming from. With a sudden "squish", someone drew his foot back. Half of the weird creature's body had been crushed into a bloody mess. The creature twitched for a second and stopped moving.

The male escort looked at his leg which was now stained by a smelly fluid and walked aside to clean his feet after Bai Xiaoke commented relentlessly on how disgusting it was.

This incident didn't distract the group for long. Lin Sanjiu paused for a moment and asked again, "You mentioned that all of you came to this world together?"

The Quacker, the teenager who trapped Hui Chuyan and hid in the sky, was now surrounded by four women and could not leave. Since he had been caught by the women, he had already withdrawn his iron railing and Hui Chuyan also returned to her companions' side. Hearing Lin Sanjiu's question, the short teenager rubbed his nose and spoke with some arrogance, "That's right! We, five bros, have already agreed to stay together no matter how hard it is to find for a Consular Officer. When we met our boss, we were impressed by him. That's why we decided to move together as a group of six."

"Oh," Lin Sanjiu replied curtly, showing little interest in his

‘boss’. "Other than the boss, Yo Daddy, how many people are there in this territory? "

"Didn't I say that there are five of us?" the teenager answered awkwardly.

This number was way lesser than what Lin Sanjiu had expected. She narrowed her eyes, feeling a little suspicious, "Why are there so few people? How can you even call this a base? Did you manage to find a Consular Officer here?"

The short teenager immediately stuck out his chin, "So what if we have only a few people! Our territory is large—"

He wanted to boast about the outstanding abilities in his group, but considering his opponents' prowess and his own predicament, he decided to swallow his words, "We haven't found a Consular Officer. We split up every day to patrol our territory and also to look for a Consular Officer. But, recently, for some reasons, there suddenly seem to be fewer people around. We're also quite troubled by that."

"You've forgotten the part about you guys robbing people." Bai Xiaoke couldn't help criticizing, "With fewer people around, business is bad, right?"

The short teenager's face turned red as if he had no way of retorting her words. It took some time before he finally countered, "Ever since we came to this crappy Garden of Eden, we haven't eaten any decent human food! Do you think those insects that look like giant rodents are suitable for human consumption? Besides, they can't even fill out stomachs... If I have the ability to snatch some food, why shouldn't I? I am just unlucky today, since I got caught by you people. I admit defeat!"

He spoke with such conviction and self-righteousness that Bai Xiaoke was simply dumbfounded. The teenager was still at the prime of his youth so he seemed unfazed even though he was in a rather prickly situation. Lin Sanjiu shot him a glance and asked,

"What's your name?"

"Aren't we speaking just fine? Why do you need my name?" the teenager suddenly appeared uncooperative.

"Are you going to say it?"

"Green Melon." The teenager gave a face like he had eaten a plate of flies.

"Huh?" Xueqin let out an awkward remark.

Lin Sanjiu felt that the serious image she created for herself had totally disappeared. She heard a muffled sound beside her. Apparently, someone was trying to stifle a laugh.

"Alright, Gr... Green Melon, bring us to your boss." Lin Sanjiu tried her best to remain stern while she finished her sentence. Green Melon looked at her with a slightly shocked face.

Lin Sanjiu naturally had her own plans. From the previous interrogation, the six people had probably arrived here in this world very far from Garden of Eden City. Thus, they knew nothing about the events which happened within that snow globe shield. To the six people, this was just a world where resources were hard to come by, with nothing special. On the other hand, Lin Sanjiu's group did not lack food and their priority was to have more people to cover a wider area so that they could look for a Consular Officer as soon as possible. Since both groups had their own agenda, it might be possible to work together with that boss, Yo Daddy. Lin Sanjiu was not worried at all that there might be possible altercations.

They only fell into the teenager's trap because they were not careful. When they escaped from the city, they ransacked almost every place and got many useful items, especially from Garden of Eden Laboratories. Lin Sanjiu converted many items into her cards there. Afterall, the first and foremost condition for both groups to make a deal was that Lin Sanjiu's group had enough firepower to

force a negotiation.

Green Melon's hands were securely tied up. With Bai Xiaoke's escort watching him, he walked unhappily. To make things worse, Bai Xiaoke kept asking him these questions: "Why is your name Green Melon? Did your parents like to eat melons? Do you like to eat melons? Is green melon a vegetable or a fruit?"

If he didn't answer, the escort would grab him by his neck and shake him. The teenager who had been named after a fruit finally snapped after he couldn't stand it any longer and answered honestly, "In the place where we were born, our country has a rule that no one can have the same name so parents do not have the freedom to choose their children's name. Every newborn is randomly named by a machine... But after 1000 years, all the normal names have all been used up!"

[What sort of stupid policy is that?] Hui Chuyan thought to herself, somewhat sympathizing with the boy.

After Green Melon said that, the group finally saw the vague outline of a row of buildings.

In an apocalyptic world, those buildings were considerable well-preserved; three buildings were linked by a few staircases and a shared roof. Even though half of the structure had already collapsed and was overgrown with plants, the other half was still livable.

When they walked closer, they saw a field behind the building. There was a set of rusty swings in the field and also two broken football post. They seemed to be at an elementary school. When they walked to the front gate, Green Melon suddenly shouted out, "Boss! Are you around? Is there anyone around? I am Green Melon! Please come save me!"

Lin Sanjiu and the others did not try to stop him and just let him yell.

His voice reverberated through the buildings until even the echoes faded. The elementary school remained quiet. There was no reply. Green Melon couldn't help mumbling to himself, "That's odd. There should at least be one person on duty." He gathered his strength and yelled out again, "517! Error 517, are you there? Aren't you on duty today? Save me!"

[Error 517, seems to be a person's name?] Lin Sanjiu suddenly wondered how powerful [No coincidence. No story] would be if she gave this ability to these people.

Xueqin sighed sympathetically, "I guess the person who created the naming system must have run out of ideas..."

Under such circumstances, it was difficult to maintain a serious atmosphere. After some time, a cautious-sounding voice came from the school building.

"Little Melon, how were you caught by those people? Who are they? What do they want?" The voice seemed to belong to a young man, but older than Green Melon.

Lin Sanjiu immediately stepped forward and replied solemnly, "We don't intend to harm this teenager. But, I want to see your boss. Please pass this message. After we meet your boss, we'll let him go."

Lin Sanjiu's calm voice rang out so that the listener in the building heard her perfectly. This was probably the first time Error 517 had encountered such an event, he quickly shouted, "Wait for a while!" Then, there was no further reply.

Error 517 left for a long time but no one had any better ideas so the group simply stood at the gates waiting quietly. Under the watchful eyes of the escort, Green Melon nervously circled through a few different standing stances.

Lin Sanjiu drew out a card and held it tightly in her hands while she waited for the best opportunity. Unexpectedly, the ground

shook violently a few times and suddenly the escort, Xueqin and Bai Xiaoke fell into a deep hole below them even before they made a sound.

The tremor was powerful and was just like a mini earthquake. It happened so abruptly that by the time Hui Chuyan and Lin Sanjiu stabilized themselves after a hard time and stumbled to the side of the hole trying to help their companions, the black soil mixed with rotten plants shifted like a closing mouth and swallowed their companions without a trace.

"Damn it!" Lin Sanjiu tensed up and turned behind. Sure enough, Green Melon ran farther and farther away—he already took his chance and was running like mad towards the school building as if escaping from wild dogs.

Lin Sanjiu knew that if she let him escape, they would immediately become the passive party. Lin Sanjiu tried her best to steady herself and pushed her legs against the ground, her body thrust forward like an arrow. Luckily, the trembling ground also affected Green Melon. Within a blink of an eye, her knee struck the teenager at the back of his head. Green Melon let out a cry before he fell on the ground.

"Who did this? If you don't want to die, you better let them go!" Lin Sanjiu said with a blood-curdling tone while she pressed down his neck.

"Okay, okay. I know. It hurts..."

Green Melon said feebly when a second voice rang out from the building, "Who are you? How dare you bully my people!"

Lin Sanjiu looked up immediately. She could not believe her eyes.

Chapter 157: A Popup Surprise from the Soil

Lin Sanjiu looked up in shock at the figure of a person standing on the second floor of the building nearby. The first thing she saw was the person's large fluffy beard—she instantly let out a sigh of relief.

During that confusion, she couldn't really hear that person clearly but found the voice very familiar, so she was surprised. However, when she looked properly, she saw a man packed with bulky muscles and popping veins from head to toe. Staring at her with his large fierce eyes, he had the looks of an outlaw who had just walked out from Water Margin.

"You ladies down below, let my brother go!" The burly man roared.

Since they viewed them as enemies, Lin Sanjiu's expression turned cold and grabbed the back of Green Melon's neck, pulled him from the ground and lifted him up directly. Even though Green Melon was almost the same height as Lin Sanjiu, she suddenly strangled him, he couldn't really breathe as his feet dangled above the ground.

At the same time, the ground gradually stopped shaking. Hui Chuyan quickly rushed toward Lin Sanjiu. Meanwhile, another head peeked from the second floor. It was an average young man with a forgettable appearance. He observed the situation and spoke carefully, "Let Little Melon go and we will return the three people to you."

From the sound of his voice, he was the first person to respond previously, Error 517.

"You need to prove to me that they're still alive first," Lin Sanjiu said icily.

Considering the circumstances, her companions were definitely

buried alive; if so, how long more could they last underground? Naturally, Lin Sanjiu didn't dare to waste a single second.

Despite his beefy image, the muscular man was clever. He spat and disagreed, "Do you think we're idiots? What can we do if you stab Little Melon to death once your companions are free?"

[That means, they are still in the same place.] Hui Chuyan instantly caught this detail; she exchanged a glance with Lin Sanjiu and let out a quiet gasp. She ran to where the people had fallen and started to dig as if her life depended on it. With her posthuman strength, a large hole appeared in a few minutes. However, no matter how deep the hole was, she didn't see a single strand of hair.

"It's useless... Unless Brother Little Snow let them go, you guys won't be able to dig them out." Green Melon said with a hoarse voice once he managed to snatch a breath.

["Little Snow" refers to that bearded man?] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself.

"If you expect me to let him go first, that will never happen," Lin Sanjiu calmed herself down and looked up, shouting, "Come down! We'll exchange our hostages at the same time!"

This was something that both sides could reluctantly compromise about. Error 517 and Xiaoxue exchanged looks and finally walked down from the building. When both men were over ten meters away from the women, they stopped.

"When you let my brother walk to that stone, I will break the ground and release your people." Upon a closer look, the burly, bearded man looked even larger. He stood like a tower, casting a huge shadow. "This should be fair enough!"

"Chuyan, keep your eyes on the ground," Lin Sanjiu ordered while she stared hard at the two men in front of her, "I will let the teenager go now, so you can go get our companions from the

ground."

After she said that, she pushed Green Melon forward. He staggered, finally regaining his freedom. Just as he sprinted with large strides away from them, Hui Chuyan yelled to Lin Sanjiu, "Ah, the ground opened!"

Lin Sanjiu felt a large burden off her shoulders but she did not dare to lower her guard. She held the card in her hands tightly and slowly retreated a few steps backward. She saw the same three holes as before. When the man released the hostages from the ground, there was certainly less ground activity, the black soil and rotten vegetation shifted downward revealing three heads.

Xueqin's natural hair color was different from the two others. The hole revealed two heads with black hair and one with a bead of brown hair. They were probably Bai Xiaoke and the others.

"You really didn't have to do that," seeing that she could rescue her companions soon, Lin Sanjiu's tone relaxed a little. She was still a little angry that these people were so untactful, but she suppressed her anger and said, "I already told you, I don't intend to hurt any of you, I just want to see 'Yo Daddy'—"

Before she could finish her sentence, she heard Hui Chuyan's alarmed cry. This was followed by a sudden attack from the back. As Lin Sanjiu did not let down her guard fully, this immediately put her on full alert. With a swoosh, she threw her body away from the trajectory of the sneak attack.

[Where is the enemy?] Just as this thought surfaced in Lin Sanjiu's head, she twisted her body to look at the three holes in the ground. She immediately comprehended the situation. Within the three holes, there were two black-haired women she didn't know. They had activated their ability and were now surrounding Hui Chuyan. At the same time, the brown fluff which Lin Sanjiu mistook as Xueqin had now become a small furry ball heading toward her at high speed.

Lin Sanjiu suddenly stopped her retaliation and pulled back her arm. She froze and stared with her mouth wide opened. Just when the brown furry ball was about to hit her face, it suddenly changed direction. It fell to the ground with a thud and reverted to its original form.

Lin Sanjiu stared wide-eyed at the twitching pair of long ears. Her heart pounded, "Ra... Rabbit!

The little furry ball was indeed B.Rabbit.

B.Rabbit's fur seemed silkier than before. He still had the same goth outfit but the pink tiny carrots on his body had disappeared.

He stared at Lin Sanjiu with the same disbelief. It took some time before he suddenly called out, "Xiao Jiu!"

Green Melon and the others were stunned by his words. As if remembering something, B.Rabbit turned behind and shouted, "Stop fighting! These are our own people. You better stop!"

The two black-haired women suddenly jumped out from the hole. Their movements and physiques were exactly the same. When they stood still, Lin Sanjiu and Hui Chuyan realized that the two women were actually two expressionless twins with ear-length hair.

As if he was still a little unable to believe his eyes, B.Rabbit took two steps forward and sniffed Lin Sanjiu. He quickly leaped on her pants and got up to her shoulders. He shook his fur and exclaimed, "It's really you..."

At that moment, Lin Sanjiu suddenly realized why "meeting an old friend in a foreign land" is considered one of the "Four Joys of Life". Even though she tried her best to look for her companions, she knew deep down that the probability was very small... Yet, among the countless universes, she actually managed to reunite with B.Rabbit. This was definitely a gift from God!

Lin Sanjiu let out a soft sob and her eyes felt a little moist. She

held B.Rabbit by its ears and scolded him angrily, "So, you're their boss! You even call yourself 'Yo Daddy' so that people would call you daddy! How would I know it was you, you Henan Rabbit!"

B.Rabbit immediately struggled in midair, "My underlings are still watching—let go..."

Both Lin Sanjiu and B.Rabbit had many questions for each other. After a very quick messy exchange of words, they finally realized that they could enter the building to continue their conversation. The burly man quickly understood the situation and opened up another hole and returned Xueqin and Bai Xiaoke. The people who were just fighting with each other seconds before looked at each other blankly. As if actors caught in a scene which changed too quickly, they were still unable to get into their roles.

"Xiao Jiu, let me give you an introduction," B.Rabbit said after inviting the women into the elementary school. He ignored the pale faces of his underlings and patted each of the five people in his group excitedly with his paw. "This is my army! They have been bowled over by my rabbit charms! How's that? I'm pretty cool, right?"

Other than Green Melon, each of them quickly introduced themselves. The pair of twin sisters were called Metaphysics and Empiricism respectively. Supposedly, their parents drew their names together, so at least their names seemed related. The name which made them brood the most was actually the burly bearded man's name, he was called, "Springsakura Snow".

"I can't believe no one else had this name before?" Xueqin said in disbelief, "It's such a waste..."

Springsakura Snow was also very dissatisfied with his name. He acted like he didn't hear what Xueqin said and focused his attention on B.Rabbit and Lin Sanjiu. Standing behind them, he turned back to look at Error 517 every now and then and sighed, "Boss speaks with such an imposing aura, I tried but I just can't

imitate this..."

While the eight people chatted behind, Lin Sanjiu couldn't resist blurting out the question which had been in her mind for a long time, "Where is Hai Tianqing and Hu Changzai? Did they come with you?"

Chapter 158: General Knowledge About the Apocalyptic Worlds

On some level, Lin Sanjiu's reunion with B.Rabbit wasn't truly by random chance.

Within the entire school building, the best-preserved classroom was cleaned up by the group of five people. The tables and chairs whose frames had already decayed and would turn into dust at any moment were removed from the room. After cleaning up, they placed on the floor some dried grass that they somehow found, and everyone sat down. Without saying, this service was obviously provided for a certain someone.

The nine humans and one rabbit sat cross-legged on the grassy 'carpet' and started talking. After Xueqin and the others finally got over the shocking fact that 'the rabbit could talk', the atmosphere in the air became much more harmonious with the help of food.

"So, you are the Big Sister Lin that Boss mentioned before," Green Melon looked embarrassed but he showed no restraint when he tore a large piece of bread and stuffed it in his mouth. "Really. If I knew that, I wouldn't steal from you..."

"Yeah, you would just ask for it, huh?" Bai Xiaoke grumbled, feeling a slight reluctance to share their food. Hui Chuyan laughed.

B.Rabbit's group, with himself and his five underlings, actually had a difficult life over these few months. They had not eaten any proper food, and their last meal, two days back, was a nest of mice. When Xueqin placed some food on the ground in a straight line, the five humans and one rabbit pounced on the food. When Xueqin looked up, she saw that each of them had stuffed their cheeks full. She couldn't even understand a word they said.

The bread which expanded after being removed from its vacuumed packaging was not much smaller than B.Rabbit's body.

He laid and sunk into the bread, chewing the food in his mouth quickly. Finally, he paused and said to Lin Sanjiu, "Huh? So, you haven't heard?"

"About what?" Lin Sanjiu shook her head and handed the rabbit a can of beer.

"In the last few days in Hyperthermal Hell, we found a Consular Officer. We each got a visa to a different world. Executive Hai went to a world called 'Back Garden' while Hu Changzai went to a place called 'Nudist Camp'." B.Rabbit paused for a moment seemingly unaware that the men in the group reacted awkwardly to the words 'Nudist Camp'. "That name is pretty strange."

He nudged the opened beer can with his nose and sniffed. He was quickly attracted to the new smell and licked his lips, "Technically, we each had some probability of meeting you, it was just a really small one."

"What do you mean by that? Why did you decide to split up?"

"It's all that Consular Officer's fault!" B.Rabbit smacked his lips and looked at her. Remembering something, he remarked, "Ah, you haven't really made any deals with a Consular Officer before so you don't know about this."

With an annoying 'Hehe-I-know-more-than-you' expression, he started explaining about the Consular Officer Database.

"All Consular Officers can only issue a limited number of visas. For example, the Consular Officer we found was called Sian. When he entered Hyperthermal Hell, he received the right to issue 146 visas. Once he had finished issuing these 146 visas, Sian wouldn't be able to issue any more visas. This is why visas are so valuable. Even if he demanded an incredible price, no one would make a comment. These visas are further divided into different types. Things get complicated here." B.rabbit licked a drop of beer and his eyes sparkled, "What's this? It tastes really good!"

[So, he had never drunk beer before.] Lin Sanjiu thought as she couldn't resist patting the rabbit's head, "Back to the subject."

"Well... if I were to talk about the classification of visas, I would need to tell you about the 'Twelve Worlds Centrum' first." B.Rabbit ate while he spoke, his split lips moved rapidly as he continued, "The name 'Twelve Worlds Centrum' actually refers to a consortium of twelve worlds."

When they heard the term 'Twelve Worlds Centrum', B.Rabbit's five underlings continued eating happily with the same expressions; on the other hand, Xueqin and the three other women immediately showed interest.

Just when they were about to ask more questions, B.Rabbit waved them off with his paw sternly, exuding a 'shut up and listen to me' aura.

[Well, you've been a Boss for a long time...] Lin Sanjiu couldn't help stifling her laughter.

"It is said that Twelve Worlds Centrum had already existed for many years. The people who traverse among these twelve worlds are also very secretive... For some reasons, any Consular Officer who ended up in the Twelve Worlds Centrum, or were born there, would find changes to their Consular Officer Database."

"What sort of changes?" Bai Xiaoke immediately offered the rabbit a little egg jerky very tactfully.

"Let me use Sian as an example." B.Rabbit took a bite without holding back, "Most of the time, he usually lives in two of the worlds among the Twelve Worlds Centrum. So, within the 146 visas he can issue, around 30 of them are for these two worlds. He also has about over 10 visas for one of the other worlds in the Twelve Worlds Centrum."

Just when Lin Sanjiu was thinking about how Sian could settle down in two worlds, she silently scolded herself for her stupidity—

all he had to do was to find another Consular Officer who lived in the Twelve Worlds Centrum so that they could exchange visas. With that, he could travel and live between two worlds.

"Even though the Twelve Worlds Centrum also only consists of Apocalyptic Worlds, due to their special status, they have supposedly been beautifully constructed... there are landscapers and an endless stream of heavy traffic. Everything works in an orderly manner. It is almost like the pre-apocalyptic world!" B.Rabbit certainly looked a little eager to go to those worlds. "Imagine a place where you don't have to worry about food and lodging. Of course, there is a high demand for visas to places like these. Not only are they the most expensive, the Consular Officers would usually finish issuing these visas first."

[This isn't all that hard to imagine...] Lin Sanjiu didn't expect that Twelve Worlds Centrum would actually be like this. For a moment, she wondered how the worlds were reconstructed and also started hoping to see those worlds. However, she remembered Puppeteer and sighed inwardly.

"Other than these 40 or so visas leading to the Twelve Worlds Centrum, Sian has only two types of visa. The first type is the one that you mentioned, what is that guy's name... Whatever. A person could go to a world six months before the apocalyptic event. This sort of visa is a little more expensive. After all, you would have six months to prepare...

"As for the other type, this is the most common visa that a Consular Officer can issue and also the cheapest. This is also the type of visa we got... Sian had already sold all the better visas. When it was our turn, he only had three visas to three normal apocalyptic worlds. That was just enough for myself, Hu Changzai and Executive Hai." B.Rabbit shook his legs sloppily. When he saw that everyone was focused on him, he felt that it was a waste that they didn't have a lectern there. If he could say that on a lectern, how impressive-looking would that be!

That was a little too much new information for Lin Sanjiu to process. She crooked her head and thought for some time before asking, "If you got three visas to three random places, why did you guys still exchange your items for them?"

[How is this any different from being sent away randomly?] she thought.

"Um. As Sayo and Sian are friends, he told us a lot about these visas..." B.Rabbit replied immediately, "I also asked the same question then. Within the Consular Officer Database, there are two rules. Firstly, there are definitely Consular Officers in a world where you can go with a visa. This means that, if we keep getting visas, we would eventually have a chance to reach Twelve Worlds Centrum... Once we reached the Twelve World Centrum, everything would be different. Think about it, that sort of populous place would have its own mature administrative system. If you wanted to look for a Consular Officer, you would only have to go to the 'Consular Officer Association'. If you had money, you could simply obtain the visas for these twelve worlds in different orders. You wouldn't ever have to drift aimlessly and suffer in an unknown world!"

That's right. For all of them, it was heartwarming even to know that there was a way to escape this sort of nightmarish apocalyptic days and a way to lead a stable life without needing to constantly worry about survival.

Bai Xiaoke raised a thumbs up and summoned an escort who started cleaning up the mess on the floor while she asked, "What is the second rule?"

"The world that you would be sent to via a visa isn't entirely random..." B.Rabbit found it a little hard to explain the next part of what he wanted to say, so he gave an example, "For example, if 100 people would arrive at Garden of Eden each time. Maybe within these 100 people, only one person manages to get a normal visa. This person would go to the same place that at least one of the 99

people would be randomly sent to... It's something like that."

He found it rather confusing so he checked again, "Do you understand?"

The twin sisters nodded quickly. The younger sister, Empiricism, had a downward pointing arrow scratched on her arm by B.Rabbit. With an expressionless face, she added, "Of course! Boss' logically constructed sentences are super clear."

Lin Sanjiu was rendered speechless as she rolled her eyes and looked at the ceiling.

Even though B.Rabbit was wearing a goth outfit and really seemed smarter than before, this was a little too...

"So, the destination of the normal visas are actually chosen from one of the destinations that the other people in the same world would be sent to... Is that it?" Xueqin tried to clarify.

"Yes." B.Rabbit gave her an aloof nod. Then, he pushed the can of beer. The beer fell on its side with a 'clink', "Can you understand now? When we split up, we held the hope that at least one of us would meet you!"

Lin Sanjiu felt a sudden wave of emotions but she didn't want the others to see it. She lowered her head feeling a little embarrassed. She rubbed B.Rabbit's fur and whispered, "I know, I know..."

Lin Sanjiu and B.Rabbit kept quiet for some time while the others continued discussing. After that, she asked, "If that is the case, we can only count on our luck to meet Hu Changzai and Hai Tianqing again?"

B.Rabbit used his teeth to open a second can of beer. He paused and replied, "That isn't really the case. We met this girl called Sayo, right? Oh, she really likes Executive Hai. I don't know why she has such acquired taste... Anyway, she was born in one of the worlds within the Twelve Worlds Centrum. She has quite a few different bases in numerous worlds. She told us that once we reach

the Twelve Worlds Centrum, we could leave a sign at her place..."

Lin Sanjiu nodded silently.

There was now an additional reason why they had to get a visa... She slowly looked at Xueqin, Bai Xiaoke and Hui Chuyan. She felt obligated to protect and take care of these young women who trusted and followed her. Unfortunately, they came here at different times, once they separated, she really couldn't do much...

But, if they could all reach the Twelve Worlds Centrum, it would be a different story.

The issue was finding a Consular Officer. But, where could they find one now?

She turned behind and asked, "You guys have been lording over this place for such a long time. I am sure you must have met quite a few people. Are you sure you didn't even come across a single Consular Officer?"

She didn't expect that this question would reveal B.Rabbit's worries.

He sighed, "It's quite strange. Initially, there were quite a few posthumans traveling through here. However, in the past one to two months we haven't seen any living person. Honestly, if you guys didn't come here, we were planning to move to another place..."

When she heard that B.Rabbit was planning to go to another place, Lin Sanjiu was a little stunned. She suddenly remembered her Dog Frisbee. Before this, she thought that the base Green Melon mentioned was Er Dao's 'old home'... However, when she took out her [Dog Frisbee], the LED lights were still shining brightly.

[Where the hell did Er Dao set that geographic marker?]

Chapter 159: The Place Where the Lights Stop Blinking

During the few days they rested in the elementary school, Lin Sanjiu had an impression that the universe had forsaken her. It was too quiet and too desolated.

The sobbing wind which circled the wilderness outside seemed to be the only sound left in the world. When the wind stopped, they could only see a vast patch of dirty green before their eyes when they looked out from the roof. Sometimes, when they opened the doors in the building, they were usually shocked by some disgusting bug which randomly appeared, scurrying from the side of the door.

The sounds of her companions moving brought a mild atmosphere of life around her. Other than that, it was as if there were barely any other people existing in the entire Garden of Eden.

"It's impossible that everyone reached their time to leave at the same time, right?" After she patrolled the place twice, Lin Sanjiu couldn't help feeling bewildered. When B.Rabbit brought this up, she didn't directly observe the particular situation, but now it was different.

Yesterday, Lin Sanjiu walked for five hours and covered a few hundred square kilometers. However, she was secretly surprised that there was only a deadly silence around her everywhere. After covering such a large area, she just met two other posthumans, and one of them was a corpse that had died at an unknown time.

"Sister Lin, our search was considerably better. At least, we saw one person. For the past few days, we didn't even see a single person after walking for a whole day," Error 517 said encouragingly when he saw her gloomy expression.

The nine humans and one rabbit all stayed in the elementary school. Every day, they paired up after drawing lots. Two people were left behind to guard the place while the others would spread out to search for food and the signs of other posthumans. Even though Lin Sanjiu brought quite a lot of food from Garden of Eden, there were now six more mouths to feed. Thus, it was vital for them to scavenge before they ran out of it.

Lin Sanjiu was paired with Error 517. Hui Chuyan was somewhat disappointed for a few days about that and left with Snow. B.Rabbit and Bai Xiaoke stayed behind to guard the school while the others split up and left. But just as they expected, no one brought back any good news.

"Even though we saw another posthuman, that person ran away before we got close," Xueqin said with a moody face. "I don't think he was a Consular Officer."

Unlike the usual reactions, Consular Officers belonged to the group of posthumans who would neither avoid nor back-off when they saw another posthuman. Sometimes, they might even take the initiative to approach one. After all, they could only survive in the apocalyptic worlds by making deals with other posthumans and getting resources and combat items from others.

In terms of food, they didn't really have that much luck either. Lin Sanjiu clearly remembered that the other posthumans here already established a way of life, for example, rearing those rats as a source of protein. Despite that, when they went out to search for food, they found nothing.

If this was the case, it was quite meaningless for them to stay here. It seemed that they might really have to continue following the [Dog Frisbee] to the geographic marker set by Er Dao. No matter what, that was the only clue that Lin Sanjiu had to find for a trace of other posthumans living here.

After everybody discussed it for some time, they decided to leave

immediately. When everyone had packed all their belongings, the group left the dilapidated elementary school and started their journey.

Lin Sanjiu thought that B.Rabbit would laugh madly when he saw her biting the frisbee in her mouth, however, she realized that he didn't react at all. After she asked inquisitively, she was finally relieved. [That's right. A two-year-old pet rabbit wouldn't know how people usually played with their dogs!]

Considering the current state of Garden of Eden, their group of ten was considerably large. Besides, they had not seen other posthumans for such a long time, so they weren't that vigilant. Although the twin sisters Metaphysics and Empiricism were given the task of keeping a lookout on both sides, the group was actually traveling rather leisurely. Chatting while they walked, and getting snacks from Xueqin when they were hungry, it was more like they were on an excursion.

After they grew familiar with each other, Green Melon became more lively and excitable. He was now describing how the five of them met B.Rabbit, "At first, those duoluozhongs probably thought that our boss was just an ordinary rabbit. They wanted to catch and eat him. We were also tightly surrounded. We thought that was the end for us. But who knew that our Boss was so powerful..."

To summarize, their group of five accidentally got surrounded by a large group of duoluozhongs. A rabbit near them quickly showed his prowess and saved all of them.

"In our hometown, rabbits are legendary, divine animals which can defeat thousands of enemies..." After recounting what had happened, Green Melon suddenly talked about some sort of extraordinary rabbit which existed somewhere within the universes, "We finally believed that it was true when we meet our boss!"

"Your ability had evolved?" Lin Sanjiu took out the frisbee from

her mouth and ask B.Rabbit after she heard that.

Even though B.Rabbit's combat capabilities were not bad from the start, it didn't seem like he could perform those incredible feats that his underlings mentioned.

"[All the carrots are mine] leveled up once, so I could absorb the strongest abilities from a few enemies. But honestly, without my [Goth outfit], I would be in danger as well." B.Rabbit shot a glance at his underlings and whispered to Lin Sanjiu, "I tell you the truth because I trust you. Don't tell this to my underlings."

"You're petty!" Lin Sanjiu chided him while she laughed and placed the frisbee back into her mouth. When the frisbee was in her mouth again, the LED lights which had been pointing in the front direction started blinking.

Lin Sanjiu stopped and stared at the frisbee. If she remembered correctly, the blinking meant that their destination was drawing near. The other realized her abnormal reaction and quickly crowded around her. However, when they looked around, they still found themselves surrounded by a bland wilderness. If they had to point out a difference, there were just a little more run-down buildings. They probably reached the center of what was once a town.

Not knowing if luck or misfortune awaited them, they all raised their guards. They slowed down their walking pace and followed the blinking light. As they walked, the ground grew uneven; it was as if someone had picked up the ground like a piece of paper and created large mountain creases on its surface. They had to climb these short ridges before they could go forward. Though they weren't that high, they were very steep. It didn't take the posthumans much effort to climb to the top of the first ridge.

Lin Sanjiu looked out from a high vantage point. She couldn't see that far as the next ridge blocked her view. She only took note of the long stretch of red soil which looked like long red scars and the

orange setting sun.

"Why does this place look a little disgusting?" Bai Xiaoke mumbled, breaking the silence.

It was probably a disgust that only females would understand. The ridges looked like multiple keloids on a person's skin after it been cut. The parallel ridges did give all of them an uncomfortable feeling. To add to that, the patches of deep green vegetation that scattered around the red soil seemed like discolored spots on a person who had already entered the rigor mortis stage.

Lin Sanjiu bit the frisbee again and took a step forward. She almost didn't realize the next second that the lights stopped blinking.

"We've reached?" B.Rabbit asked vacuously. "So that guy called Er Dao lived in this tasteless place?"

Lin Sanjiu was also at a loss. [The lights would only stop blinking when the frisbee reached its previous geographical marker, right?] She stepped on the ground under her feet and walked around twice. There was nothing around. She couldn't seem to find the place where the geographical marker[1] could be hidden.

She tried to walk forward, but the light did not light up. Once she walked away backward and out of a certain boundary, the lights would flash again. This was certainly their final destination.

"Weird. What can we find here?" She continued with the frisbee, feeling a bit hesitant. "Let split up and take a look around. Be careful. We have to stay within each other's sights."

The words barely left her mouth when their situation changed instantaneously. A small black shadow fell from the sky with a swoosh and all of them quickly rushed aside. The thing fell heavily to the ground, stirring up a dust wall which reached a human height.

Squinting through and coughing in the dust, the twin sisters who

were tasked with guarding the group immediately reacted instinctively. One stood on the left and the other on the right and quickly drew out a protective forcefield.

[Queue during a Restaurant's Peak Hour]

Most people probably had the experience of sitting on a small stool outside a restaurant while staring impatiently inside, hoping that the people eating would quickly leave. Even if you're so hungry that you would eat a horse or even the service staff, you have no choice but to wait patiently outside the restaurant until your number is called.

The ability that developed from this particular phenomenon is a bane for slowpokes. No matter how powerful the opponent, he has to wait until his number is called before he can attack. The waiting time is random but as this ability becomes more powerful, the waiting time would increase.

PS: When the enemy is waiting, the ability user cannot move, m'kay.

"Dear honorable posthuman, your queue number is A102, you still have to wait for 24 seconds." A voice that sounded like a female using a microphone rang from the forcefield. The twins immediately sighed in relief.

24 seconds wasn't short!

Though the twins couldn't move, their companions behind the forcefield could do that freely. This was the reason why the twins had to always work with a third party. Snow narrowed his eyes and walked up to the black figure.

It was an unconscious young man, and he didn't seem dangerous.

"Huh?" the bearded man with a towering stature remarked curiously. "I don't think he was trying to attack us."

"You know what happened?" B.Rabbit immediately asked demandingly.

"Yes, this person must have just arrived from another world." Snow replied quickly, "From the looks of it, he must have been on higher ground in the previous world. So when he was sent over, he fell from mid-air and fainted..."

After he said that, he suddenly realized that his companions were looking at him with odd eyes. He turned behind hurriedly and discovered that the unconscious man had disappeared.

There was merely an indent left on the ground.

Chapter 160: No Enemies

"Huh? Where's the person?"

The wind had died down. The setting sun was gradually swallowed by the thick layer of gray clouds in the sky. It was as if someone had casually washed the whole scenery with gray paint. On the reddish ground not far from them, there was a very faint indent; a few wild blades of grass on the ground bent to one side as if they had just been under something. Yet, no one really saw what happened.

Snow stood just beside the place where the male posthuman had disappeared. He was standing by the edge of the ridge, which had a gentle slope that slid into a valley.

Everyone could see the confusion hidden behind the man's bearded face—he stared at the empty space beside him blankly for a few seconds. He was just about to walk closer to examine when he heard B.Rabbit shouting, "Little Snow!"

"Huh?" he looked back with his huge eyes, "Boss, why did you call me?"

The others were about ten or more steps away from Snow, and B.Rabbit was the closest to him. B.Rabbit narrowed his eyes, painted with thick black eyeliner. His expression was solemn.

"Little Snow, don't move right now," he rarely spoke with such a serious tone, and uttered each word carefully, one after the other.

As commanded, Snow stopped moving. He froze in position as everyone looked at him.

After a while, Lin Sanjiu spoke slowly, "You can slowly lift up one leg." The large, burly man looked at her, perplexed.

[What's happening?] Snow was puzzled. "What's wrong?" he grumbled before he followed her instructions and slowly lifted up one foot. His body immediately swayed.

The third person who spoke was Xueqin. Her usual and stoic expression had faded. Cold sweat appeared on her forehead as she continued, "Next, you have to be very careful. Take one gentle step forward. Try to walk slowly..."

Before she could finish her sentence, it was too late. Standing on one foot, Snow suddenly started wobbling. To maintain his balance, he planted his feet down on the ground with a heavy thump.

"Aghh," he hollered. He wanted to try again, but instead, he heard B.Rabbit shouting. Before he could make sense of the situation, he felt himself spinning. He suddenly saw the sky—his body had left the ground!

Before the large man could let out an angry cry from his throat, his body suddenly seemed to take on a life of its own. In a blink of an eye, he disappeared.

"Quick!"

Lin Sanjiu and B.Rabbit shot to where he was just moments before. Ignoring the possibility that they could be attacked, one of them called out her long sword, while the other's paw glowed. They reached the edge of the ridge in an instant. Unfortunately, they were shocked when they found that the valley below was empty. There was nothing below, other than red soil and crumbled rocks.

"Wasn't he thrown off the edge by something?" B.Rabbit asked hoarsely.

Lin Sanjiu shook her head. "No. Honestly speaking, both times, everything happened too fast. I didn't see how they disappeared."

When Snow turned to the other to report about the posthuman who had fallen from the sky, everyone noticed something weird. Though the man was unconscious, his shoulders suddenly moved unnaturally. It didn't look like he was about to regain

consciousness. Instead, it seemed as if something was pushing him from below. Without warning, the stranger disappeared almost instantaneously from the edge within the time it took for Snow to turn his head back.

Everyone assumed that there was something in the valley, so they told Snow to move away from his spot as quietly as he could. But, now it seemed like that wasn't the case. Just then, the others rushed over. The twin sisters quickly set up another forcefield barrier but this time the female voice they heard previously did not report a number even after some time.

The twins shared the same bowl haircut. One of them stated, "No queue number is issued, this means..." and the other finished the sentence, "There are no enemies here. To be precise, there is no one here except us."

Everyone was dumbfounded. If there were no enemies around, who took away Snow and the other man?

"We have to snap out of this. Let's go down and look for them." Lin Sanjiu broke the silence first, "Let's maintain this distance among us, don't wander too far. If something happens, just call out for help."

Lin Sanjiu spoke quickly and calmly with her cold voice. Everyone followed her order unconsciously and started searching.

The slope was gentle and was no challenge at all for the posthumans. They grabbed a few rocks and quickly reached the base of the slope. They found themselves in a long wide valley. There was nothing. They could only feel the breeze which blew over the empty landscape. Hui Chuyan felt a little frightened and hurried to Lin Sanjiu's side. Bai Xiaoke summoned her escort while the others also prepared themselves as they checked their surroundings carefully.

Of the whole group, Bai Xiaoke knew Xueqin best, so they walked together unconsciously. "Do you think we should call him?" Bai

Xiaoke was unsure as she kicked a rock by her feet, "Maybe, we will get a reply."

"What should we do if we accidentally caught the attention of something else?" Xueqin asked hesitantly. She summoned a bundle of noodles from her body and started sweeping the ground with her makeshift fly-whisk as if to prevent them from stepping into any traps.

"I doubt so?" Bai Xiaoke turned to look behind. Lin Sanjiu was talking to B.Rabbit, who was on her shoulder, with a serious face. The remaining members of the five-person team seemed very uneasy and whispered to each other occasionally. Everything seemed normal, but Bai Xiaoke couldn't help feeling that something was amiss...

She pondered about it for some time but couldn't think of anything, so she continued her conversation with Xueqin, "We are such a large group. If there were really any enemies around, they would've spotted us long ago... huh?"

Xueqin immediately stopped when she heard Bai Xiaoke's upward inflection. "What's wrong?"

Bai Xiaoke looked a little pale. She finally realized what was missing. Then, she asked an extremely illogical question.

"Have you seen my escort?"

Her male escort was a product of her ability. It was impossible for Bai Xiaoke to lose contact with him. To illustrate this with a normal person who had not evolved, the situation was like someone walking on the street and suddenly realizing that his left hand disappeared.

Xueqin's expression took a turn for the worse, "It's your ability. Can't you sense him?"

"Um, I can sense that he is still around..." a thin veil of sweat appeared on Bai Xiaoke's forehead. "It's like he is nearby, but he

can't move. I called him, but he doesn't appear..."

It was as if she could sense that her left hand was still with her, but she could neither see nor touch it.

"It must be a problem with this place," Xueqin decided promptly to head in the opposite direction, "Let's look for Xiao Jiu, we have to inform her about this."

"Okay," Bai Xiaoke responded anxiously and followed behind her. As they walked, Bai Xiaoke continued, "I tried to deactivate my ability and summon my escort again. But, it didn't work."

"I think your escort must have been caught, like Snow. They might be in the same place! If you could sense him, we might be able to save Snow." Xueqin suddenly thought of this and quickly regained her enthusiasm. She waved vigorously to Lin Sanjiu and called out, "Xiao Jiu!"

Lin Sanjiu stopped her conversation with B.Rabbit and looked at Xueqin.

"I have an idea. We might be able to find—" Just as Xueqin said this, she was interrupted by Lin Sanjiu's question which struck her like a bucket of cold water on her head, "Where is Bai Xiaoke?"

[Huh?] Xueqin was stunned. She felt a chill down her spine. When she turned back, she saw only the same brick-red soil and the patches of grass which rustled in the wind. She scanned the path where she came from and spotted the same tire which was half-covered by a thick layer of soil and the rock which Bai Xiaoke kicked. However, there was no sign of Bai Xiaoke.

"She was... behind me just now." Xueqin couldn't believe that she didn't hear a thing. "It's impossible. If someone caught her, how could she be silent?"

It was too unusual!

Lin Sanjiu knew that the situation was terrible, she raised her voice and called out to everyone, "Everyone stop! Climb up now!"

Leave this place!"

The twin sisters gave her a doubtful glance and seemed almost reluctant to just leave like this, while the others were also a little hesitant. Hui Chuyan was the only one who immediately executed what Lin Sanjiu said efficiently. She quickly grabbed a jutting rock and started climbing upward.

"What are you waiting for? Get up there!" B.Rabbit was getting fidgety and yelled out angrily. The rest of the people instantly started moving. As the slope was not steep nor high, it was easy for them to climb down and not hard for them to climb up. However, when they climbed up the short slope, their faces grew dark.

Another person was missing.

"517 was just by my side!" Green Melon had a face that was on the verge of tears. He leaned at the edge of the ridge, looking down unable to accept what had happened. However, when he looked down, it was empty. He saw nothing. "I just turned away for a second!"

B.Rabbit was so angry that he wanted to search the entire place, but there was nothing he could do here. He quickly growled, "Back off! Back off! We have to leave this goddamn place first!"

While everyone scurried away from the edge, Lin Sanjiu bit her [Dog's Frisbee] in her mouth again. She remembered that the disappearances started from the boundary where the light switched off. If they retreated to the point of that boundary, where the light flashed again, they would probably be safe, right?

She felt that this was somewhat logical. However, when Lin Sanjiu bit her frisbee and retreated for a minute, the LED lights did not flash. Her expression soured. She was 100% sure that she had already walked past the previous boundary where the light switched off.

The boundary of the 'geographical marker' seemed to be...

extending.

Chapter 161: Boundary Line

In the open wilderness, the night winds bellowed stronger than during the day. The bonfire built from broken twigs and dead leaves jumped and flickered in the wind, and the column of smoke scattered in the air before even reaching the sky.

Apart from the small bonfire, there wasn't a single source of light on the horizon—even the dimly lit stars from before had been concealed entirely by a thick layer of clouds. In the darkness, six people and B.Rabbit huddled around the fire. The wavering flames illuminated each of their solemn expressions. No one spoke for quite a while.

It had already been six hours since the disappearance of Bai Xiaoke and the two others.

Although no one explicitly spelled it out, everyone knew clearly in their minds that the hope of rescuing them alive wasn't all that great...

Finally, B.Rabbit looked to his left and right before breaking the silence. He opened his mouth and asked a question with an answer he had already confirmed a number of times: "Green Melon, didn't you see anything strange when you were in the air that day?"

"I'm telling you the truth, Boss," Green Melon showed a despondent expression, sounding dispirited and dazed, "How would I dare to miss a single sign of disturbance! But there was really nothing besides those endless rows of ridges, I didn't even see a single bug, let alone traces of human activity."

This afternoon, after Lin Sanjiu's Dog's Frisbee's lit up, they stopped their tracks after leaving the danger zone. Lin Sanjiu suddenly realized that she could get Green Melon to wear his [Cloud Mimicry Raincoat] so that he could fly up to the skies to survey the situation.

Although [Cloud Mimicry Raincoat] could only allow its user to rise straight from where he was standing without granting the user the ability to move around, Green Melon might discover something if he had an eagle's view of the place. However, that thought swiftly turned into a disappointment.

Even though they didn't dare to step into that area rashly, they exhausted all other possibilities: they used every suitable special item they had to scout the area; after the items came back empty-handed, they spent a considerable amount of effort to capture two bugs. They tied the bugs and threw them into the area.

To find out what exactly transpired, Green Melon monitored the situation from the sky while Lin Sanjiu called out her Diary Card. Ignoring its constant display of "Oh gosh this is so disgusting" and other complaints, she tied the card and the worms together before releasing them into the danger zone.

When they pulled back the string, the bugs had disappeared as expected whereas the Diary Card was left dangling from the string. Lin Sanjiu suppressed the sudden excitement she felt. She removed the card and noticed that her Diary Card only recorded a single sentence: "5:04pm, the disgusting bugs suddenly disappeared."

Then, she called Green Melon down to question him. Unfortunately, his answer wasn't any better, "I only saw two little shadows rolling for a bit before they disappeared... I couldn't see clearly how they disappeared. It seems like it happened in the blink of an eye.

With that, they were completely at a loss as to what they should do next. After quite a while, someone suddenly heaved a long sigh.

"This is all my fault," Lin Sanjiu was the one speaking. She lowered her head, staring fixed at the small piece of land in front of her, "If I didn't bring all of you here recklessly, they wouldn't just... disappear."

One of the twins, it wasn't clear which, suddenly let out a loud

sniffle.

"It wasn't your fault, Sister Lin!" Hui Chuyan consoled anxiously, "We all agreed to come here together. When we are nearing the area, you even told us to be on alert. But this is simply too illogical, even if it wasn't you, no one would ever expect this to happen!"

Lin Sanjiu patted her hand lightly as a gesture of appreciation toward Hui Chuyan's intention to defend her. In the end, Lin Sanjiu said nothing, seemingly disagreeing with what Hui Chuyan said.

There was still something, buried deep in her heart. Something she had not told the others.

The point where the LED lights blinked again was not the same location where they first stopped. It was at least two to three hundred meters away from the first boundary. No matter how hard Lin Sanjiu thought about it, she couldn't think of an explanation for this phenomenon. To make things worse, the more she thought about it, the more she began to doubt her memory.

After all, the landscape which surrounded them had already been barren for a long time. It was littered with ruins and sparse vegetation which looked more or less the same without any prominent landmarks. Besides, she was in a hurry back then; it was very possible that she could have remembered the first spot wrongly. The fact that the others seemed unaware of this was perhaps proof of this suspicion.

"Let's analyze this for a bit." Lin Sanjiu rubbed her face, speaking in an almost sighing manner. She knew that no amount of regret would bring those people back. Instead, the best choice of action was to try a little harder.

"The bugs and my Diary Card were released together. The bugs disappeared, yet the card remained. This probably means that only living organisms would disappear?" She gave a sweeping glance at everyone, holding a faint hint of anticipation.

"That appears to be the case," B.Rabbit immediately replied. "Moreover, only the things on the ground will disappear..."

"But, there is something odd about this. The people and bugs disappeared in different locations, with significant distance between them..." Xueqin commented hesitantly, "If something attacked them, could there be more than one of that something?"

Green Melon rejected her conjecture promptly, "That's impossible. Even if there was only one, I'd have detected it, let alone a few of them."

Their discussion reached a dead-end once again. Lin Sanjiu scratched her head impatiently as she reconsidered a bunch of possibilities in her head: [Was it a mutated organism? A duoluozhong? A special item? A Pocket Dimension?]

As soon as the two words 'Pocket Dimension' entered her mind, she immediately looked up, drawing everyone's attention.

"Is this... actually a Pocket Dimension?" Lin Sanjiu spoke slowly; her heart pounded rapidly as she thought that this was a small breakthrough.

"F*ck, it is possible!" B.Rabbit instantly perked up, "Some Pocket Dimensions start without any warning, sucking you in even without you knowing!"

With the exception of Xueqin, who just evolved not long ago and didn't quite understand the term "Pocket Dimension," everyone else got enthusiastic. The despondent atmosphere in the air dissipated as they had a lively discussion about the possibility that they were in a Pocket Dimension.

"If that's the case, there isn't the risk of them dying for the time being... A Pocket Dimension doesn't follow the natural order of things! We still have time!" As everyone seemed less perplexed over the matter, B.Rabbit got straight to the point, addressing the main worry they had in their hearts.

The heavy feelings of guilt which weighed down on Lin Sanjiu lightened. With that, her thoughts ran faster, and she immediately added, "Although we don't know what type of Pocket Dimension this is, there must be a second stage. We must be prepared... Hmm, how about this? I've retrieved quite a number of items from the Garden of Eden Laboratories. Let's distribute them tonight, it will boost our combat abilities in a short span of time."

Before escaping the Garden of Eden, she had already instructed the ladies around her to each carry a large bag. Meanwhile, those who couldn't find a bag bundled their items in large bed sheets. Since Lin Sanjiu could only convert 16 items a day herself, she only chose large items, which were hard to carry, to convert into cards. After that, she slowly converted the smaller items into her cards while they were traveling.

Lin Sanjiu took out all the items that might be handy. She spread the cards out on the ground in one straight row. Xueqin shifted her gaze to one of the cards and picked it up. [Bubbles Blowing Girl] was the very item which caused them a lot of trouble during their mission in the Garden of Eden.

"We can use this to guard us at night!" she remarked with a bit of excitement.

[Bubbles Blowing Girl]

Developed by the Technology Department in Garden of Eden Laboratories, this product has the sturdy appearance of a 1.8m kindergarten girl blowing bubbles while holding a bottle of soapy water. The bottle of soapy water contains an intensive energy compression device. Thus the bubbles created can cause mini-explosions.

However, the most impressive part of it would be the "Enemy homing ability" integrated with the bubbles. The bubbles would automatically pursue the targeted enemies and only explode after honing in the target. The robot's towering shadow seemingly

brought some sense of security to everyone. While Xueqin studied the robot to figure out how it operated, the others looked at the remaining cards before the cards were distributed according to their needs.

Now that they had some direction, everyone was more psychologically prepared. After they tested out the items for some time, the older twin, Metaphysics, suggested, "Boss, we still have some time before dawn. Wouldn't it be better if we all rested a bit?"

Since no one knew what to expect next from the pocket dimension, waiting tensely for something to happen wasn't the smartest course of action. B.Rabbit thought for a while before arranging the rotating night watch duties in a boss-like manner: "I agree. Everyone should recuperate and conserve our energy... Green Melon, you will stand guard for two hours before changing shifts with... Uh, what's your name? Hui Chuyan?"

Noting that B.Rabbit had everything in order, Lin Sanjiu took a rucksack out and used it as a pillow before lying down near the bonfire. B.Rabbit concluded with a final order, "Take a head count every thirty minutes, we don't want to lose another person!" Then, he found a comfortable spot to rest, curling himself into a ball.

[He does have a semblance of a boss.] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself.

Apart from Green Melon, who was on the night watch, everybody else laid down on the ground in small groups. Although none of them had fallen asleep yet, everything quickly grew quiet. Soon, they could even hear each other's breathing audibly.

After staring at the night sky for a considerable amount of time, half-alert, Lin Sanjiu finally drifted off to sleep. Unexpectedly, she had a restful sleep—it was peacefully quiet, and nothing strange happened.

When she woke up naturally from her sleep, the sky was still dark. The bonfire had already died down. It was pitch black all

around. She could only make out a few figures in the near distance and the large [Bubbles Blowing Girl] standing beside her.

[Nothing happened...] Lin Sanjiu rubbed her eyes and sat up. "Who is on the night watch now?" she asked softly. She heard the sound of the passing breeze. Her question was met with silence. Lin Sanjiu's palms began to sweat.

She looked carefully again and realized that the shadows belonged to the bags that everyone was leaning against while they slept. Despite the slight depressions on the bags, Lin Sanjiu did not see a single soul.

[Whe-where is everyone?]

Somehow, taking out her [Dog's Frisbee] was the first thing she did. Following which, she held it in her mouth.

Unfortunately, against her wishes, the lights did not start flashing.

Chapter 162: The Great White Radish Harvest

The eastern skies gradually turned white as Lin Sanjiu sat cross-legged on the ground, gazing straight into the distance.

She was still sitting by last night's bonfire, though there was now a haphazard pile of rucksacks beside her. She had finished searching through those rucksacks, belonging to Green Melon and the others, and discovered that the items distributed to them the night before were still safely stored in the bags.

Apparently, they were unknowingly captured when they were fast asleep.

Though she knew the dangers of sitting there, Lin Sanjiu didn't want to move at all.

Instead, no matter who or what captured B.Rabbit and the others, she couldn't wait for it to quickly get its hands on her—just so she could know where B.Rabbit and the others went to, and what exactly happened.

Disappointingly, even after Lin Sanjiu waited till the skies became brightly lit, with the sun slowly crawling above her head, she didn't observe even a single sign of abnormality. Sunlight pierced through the clouds, pouring down upon the ground, adding a bit of warmth to the slightly chilly weather. Lin Sanjiu could only hear the rustling of leaves, pindrop silence enveloped the world around her.

After waiting impatiently for a few more minutes, Lin Sanjiu finally jumped up, unable to tolerate waiting any longer. She packed her things and headed onward, deciding to seek out for her enemy actively.

[It might not be looking for me, but there's nothing stopping me from seeking it out, right?] Lin Sanjiu cursed angrily as she leaped

down the slope of the first ridge—it was the same place where Snow disappeared. Then, she headed for the next ridge.

There seemed to be no boundary to the unique landform as it stretched for miles. There was nothing exceptional about it, aside from the inconvenience it brought to travelers. After climbing up and down the numerous rows of ridges, Lin Sanjiu finally felt a bit tired. She heaved a sigh and sat down dejectedly.

"Everyone had been captured, so why not me? B*stard!" She took out a bottle of water and guzzled down gulps of water. Having nowhere to vent the many stifling emotions in her heart, she suddenly kicked a piece of wreckage on the ground.

It appeared to be just a metal board, but when Lin Sanjiu kicked it, it did not budge at all.

"I don't believe this. I can't even do this right!"

In an inexplicable fit of anger, Lin Sanjiu stood up, determined to pit herself against the board. She gathered all her strength and delivered a second violent kick.

This wasn't because she was hot-tempered. Ever since she arrived in the Garden of Eden, she had gone through too much. She had witnessed the display of nightmarish brutality and cruelty from the residents of the Garden of Eden and discovered Nüwa's insane determination of exterminating humans and executing her grand plan of populating the world with her new creations. But even if she set these aside, the days she spent traveling and roaming the outside world with her companions, carrying the burden of her companions' fate, worrying if they could survive for another day, was stressful enough to make a person crumble.

This was made worse when she found herself suddenly all alone again, without the support of any friends. The emotions she had forcefully repressed all this time, mixed with her uncertainty and worries, erupted all at once. After all, regardless of everything, she was just like an ordinary person.

Though her emotions were understandably normal, she had extraordinary strength. That kick of her could have overturned a heavy-duty truck. Strangely, the board-like object only wobbled a little. It was as though it had simply grown out from the ground.

"Eh?"

Facing this situation, Lin Sanjiu felt her churning sea of tumultuous emotions finally abating. She was only left with a sense of curiosity.

"What's this?" Lin Sanjiu knew her strength very well. The object in front of her was no longer than a meter and no thicker than a fingerbreadth, so there was absolutely no reason why her kick couldn't make that thin-flimsy looking thing budge.

"Is this a wreckage from a motor vehicle? It shouldn't be that long... so I should be able to pull it out, right?"

Doubting herself slightly, Lin Sanjiu held the edges of the board and began her attempts to pull it out. The thick layer of dust and soil piled on its surface fell in clusters, forming a small spatter of grey rain, getting her face caked with dust and dirt. However, the board didn't move an inch.

Lin Sanjiu stopped, she gave it some thought and activated her [Mosaic Censorship].

The explosive force of her ability blasted open the ground. Rubble and soil sprayed in all directions and she was blinded for a second. After a few violent coughs, Lin Sanjiu dusted the dirt off her face and lowered her head to examine the board sticking out from the ground.

She realized that the metal board was actually a sliding door. She dug along the sliding door and discovered that it was attached to the body of an armored fighting vehicle (AFV).

She had never seen a vehicle like that in her former world. It was only a two-seater, but its terrorizing exterior design and the

densely packed firearm muzzles under the driver's cabin was more than proof that it was a military vehicle.

Even so, her kick should make it budge, right?

Even if she wasn't digging this wreckage here, Lin Sanjiu did not know what else she should be doing so she casually dug a bit deeper into the soil with her hands. She finally saw the interior of the driver's cabin. She spotted a human-shaped figure about around ten meters deep into the earth. She could even make out the safety helmet on the figure's head. Past the figure, a small portion of the vehicle was still buried.

"Oh, it's a dead person."

Even after going through so much, Lin Sanjiu still disliked seeing dead bodies. She glanced at it and instantly lost interest. But just as she was about to leave, she suddenly paused and immediately turned her head. She hastily swept the soil off the driver's cabin and stuck her head in to have a closer look— she wanted to have a clearer view of the dead man's face.

[Will a typical corpse buried in the soil decades ago be that... fresh?]

Although soil covered the person's face, Lin Sanjiu could still vaguely see a whitish surface under that helmet. To be honest, that couldn't possibly be human skin. That white surface seemed more like a... white radish.

However, the existence of a large, helmet-wearing white radish exceeded Lin Sanjiu's imagination.

No matter what that was, it would be clear once she opened the cabin. Lin Sanjiu placed one of her hands on the driver's cabin, and the other at the point where the AFV was still stuck in the soil and activated her ability. It created an explosion of dirt, stirring up a small sandstorm, sprinkled with fragments of the vehicle.

After waiting for the dust to settle, Lin Sanjiu spat out the few

mouthfuls of soil vigorously. She squinted and looked toward the direction of the 'white radish'.

Even after looking at the white radish for a few seconds, she wasn't sure what she was looking at.

"What... is this?"

She thought that she had seen much of the world, but no matter how she looked, the thing in front of her appeared to be incomprehensible.

Lin Sanjiu walked a few steps toward it and reached for the helmet cautiously with two fingers. She carefully took off its helmet.

Her hand trembled as soon as her eyes fell upon the item. The helmet fell with a clank as it hit the body of the vehicle and rolled off into the distance.

It turned out that the 'white radish' wasn't entirely white——

At least, there was still a nest of black hair where its 'head' was supposed to be...

Lin Sanjiu endured the churning feeling in her stomach, and finally understood what it was when she took a closer look.

It was definitely a human.

He was probably a driver and died in the vehicle during the war. The years of changing topography buried the vehicle, but at some point in time, his corpse had been encased in this hard layer of white 'skin'.

Under his hair, through the semi-translucent skin, Lin Sanjiu could still somehow make out the prominent facial features of the corpse, and two black hollow eye sockets. Looking down, his neck, torso and limbs were also wrapped tightly by the layer of white skin.

Lin Sanjiu endured the feeling of discomfort, as her eyes followed

the white skin, and that was when she genuinely startled.

The white skin continued extending from the foot of the desiccated corpse; forming a thick, rhizome-like object, which certainly looked quite similar to a white radish. The other half of the vehicle was on top of another massive 'white radish'. The gigantic 'white radish' was as wide as a street which could hold at least a row of ten people. Ten people walking side by side on it. The 'white radish' which enveloped the corpse looked just like a small tassel hanging from the larger radish.

After decades, the enormous 'white radish' had already grown around the AFV. When Lin Sanjiu blasted open the ground, it only revealed a section of the large radish. Lin Sanjiu did not know how far the 'white radish' extended beyond the hole she created.

Lin Sanjiu stared blankly for a while. Without warning, she suddenly started digging madly.

Her movements were quick. Using another board from the vehicle as a digging tool, she dug a long trench following the body of the 'white radish', exposing it to the sun. But, she didn't stop. It was as if this was all she wanted to do. She dug for about four hours before she threw down the board. Her face was pale as she quickly sprinted in the opposite direction.

The ridges behind her were much taller than the others. Lin Sanjiu didn't even dare to steal a breath as she climbed to higher ground and looked down from above.

In those four hours, she had already dug open a large surface of the land. She revealed a network of dense, intricately connected gigantic white rhizomes, which came together to form a larger rhizome. She couldn't even tell where the larger rhizome started or ended. The shallowest part of the rhizome network was a mere knuckle-depth from the surface.

The gigantic white rhizomes were covered with numerous smaller roots. Some of them were as long as a human's full body

length, while others were only about an arm's length. There were a few desiccated corpses encased in some of them, while others encased some other unknown creatures.

The roots were definitely alive as they vibrated a bit when Lin Sanjiu accidentally touched them. But, that was the only reaction they displayed.

"Damn it! This isn't a Pocket Dimension!" Lin Sanjiu felt an eruption of goosebumps all over her body. She turned and ran, rushing toward where Snow and the others disappeared.

She knew then—every missing person was still in the same spot.

Chapter 163: A Western Cowboy-Style Belt Pocket

Clumps of dirt were flung into the air. They fell like misty rain behind a sweaty woman forming a small mound behind her. She had been digging for almost an hour. Looking from a distance, there were already about five small mounds scattered around her. Based on her memory, this was certainly the spot where Snow disappeared. Unfortunately, though Lin Sanjiu had dug through a large surface area of soil, revealing the network of tightly packed giant white rhizomes underneath, she could not spot a single person even after much scrutiny.

The fuzzy feeling of hope was dashed abruptly. Lin Sanjiu could feel her blood vessels pulsating. She massaged her throbbing temples, unaware of what went wrong.

[Should I try another area?] She tried her best to encourage herself. She walked back to the camping ground nervously. She didn't even dare to take a break to catch her breath. She continued digging for another two hours straight before she finally collapsed and sat down on one of the mounds. She looked at the sweat and dirt all over her and tasted the bitterness in her mouth.

At that moment, a strange sight was before her. The plants which once spotted the landscape had been uprooted and dumped into a pile, along with soil and rocks. White rhizomes with the size of locomotives were revealed beneath the surface. The intricate network of roots covered a large area. It was just as if someone's skin had been pried open and instead of blood and flesh, there were only countless white maggots...

However, this was only the upper layer of the 'white radishes'. A large part of their main body was hidden underground, and who knows how deep they extended.

"Is it possible that the missing people and animals weren't sucked

into this network of radishes?" Lin Sanjiu mumbled to herself. "If it wasn't their doing, why are there dead people encased within them..."

The alternative was that people coincidentally died in this area. As the 'white radish' grew, they gradually wrapped around the corpses. Thinking, Lin Sanjiu felt that this hypothesis was also plausible. After all, she had touched those things many times when she was digging. If the 'white radishes' did attack people, there was no reason she was still perfectly fine here.

Actually, the simplest solution was to find a rat or a worm to test her hypothesis. But, Lin Sanjiu noticed that though she had stirred up the ground quite a bit while digging, not a single bug appeared from the soil or the plants.

She remembered that when she first came to Garden of Eden, she saw many hideous, helmet-sized beetles. Their heads were covered with red compound eyes and there was always a couple around, whether she was sleeping, eating or walking. They appeared out of nowhere and occasionally Hui Chuyan would shriek out when she was caught off guard. Xueqin even taunted the girl for that.

The beetles' nests were equally disgusting. The nests comprised of a few shallow round holes. Typically, each nest held four beetles, which also fitted precisely four human heads. Lin Sanjiu was so familiar with this detail because she had already destroyed quite a number of empty nests when she was digging. She wondered when those beetles disappeared from their nests, just like her companions.

While she sat, she stretched her legs out and gazed vacantly at the network of white roots in front of her. She started to count the hours subconsciously. Snow, Bai Xiaoke and Error 517 were the earliest to disappear. It had already been 24 hours. Even though she didn't know the exact time the others disappeared, it had already been almost 15 hours since she first discovered their disappearance.

As her mind drifted in that direction, Lin Sanjiu quickly slapped herself.

"I don't care how long they've been gone!" She clenched her teeth as she furrowed her brows in resolution. "If they are alive, I want to see them. Even if they're dead, I need to see their corpses!"

As Lin Sanjiu did not know what those 'white radishes' were, she was still quite wary about them. She was cautious when she was digging and avoided even scraping the surface of their skin. However, now enraged, she didn't care anymore. She took out Er Dao's saber and swiftly struck a 'white radish' with it.

The white epidermises of the radishes weren't as hard as they appeared to be. Just as the blade of the saber touched the epidermis of that radish, the epidermis suddenly split open by itself even without the saber cutting through its surface. Perhaps, split open was the proper term here. It was more like it opened up, like how a person opens his mouth to eat. The epidermis of the white radish opened up and Lin Sanjiu could see long strands of slime dangling across the opening.

Her saber sunk into the soft, slimy, gelatinous mess without any resistance. Then, the 'white radish' instantly sealed its epidermis, swallowing half the saber in its 'mouth'. Lin Sanjiu was stunned for a few seconds as she held the hilt of the saber in her hand. She wanted to smash the radish to bits, but now that things deviated so much from her expectations, she didn't know what to do momentarily.

[Should I pull the knife out? Or should I just slash through?]

Before she could make a decision, the 'white radish' reacted again. "Slurp." The saber was 'spat out' from the surface of the epidermis and was now covered with a large amount of slime. The sealed epidermis looked the same as before as if it had never opened up in the first place.

[Huh?]

Lin Sanjiu looked at her damp saber and then at the white radish. "Why? Does it taste bad?" That was indeed her first reaction.

She held the saber closer and examined it. The saber was not only covered by slime, but there were also a few strands of roots on its blade, which had probably been cut off from the main body of the radish. As if fish out of water, those white strands of roots wiggled around for some time before drooping and becoming motionless.

Lin Sanjiu found those things ineffably disgusting.

Contemplating, Lin Sanjiu wiped her saber with a few leaves. Next, she slowly placed her arm close to the 'white radish'. This time, Lin Sanjiu fixed her eyes on it, not wanting to miss seeing anything unusual. When she touched those 'radishes' while she was digging, they merely vibrated twice. Lin Sanjiu didn't take much notice as she thought that it was just a natural biological reaction to an external stimulus. But now that she carefully observed the reaction, she witnessed the full process of that 'vibration'.

When her arm was about to touch the epidermis of the radish, a slit appeared. Lin Sanjiu could see the strands of thin roots coiled up in its slime; it looked like the exposed nerves of a dissected brain. A long thin root probed out from the slit, but somehow it swiftly withdrew before the slime hanging from it even fell to the ground. The epidermis was sealed once more, and the white radish vibrated once. Then, it appeared just as before, as though nothing ever happened.

Lin Sanjiu was dumbstruck when she saw the whole process. She used her arm and baited the radishes in a few more areas. The radishes at every spot almost reacted in the same manner. For areas where she had already tested once, the radish gave no response no matter how close she got. They did not move even when she touched them with her hand.

"What the hell is this?" Lin Sanjiu smashed her fist on one of the

radishes. The impact caused the radish to open up a small slit. Lin Sanjiu looked around her, feeling at a loss for some time. Although there weren't any bugs for her to test her hypothesis, she was very sure that these radishes had snatched the humans and animals from the surface. However, she did not know why they did not attack her.

It would be great if there was someone who could test her hypothesis. If she was around, accidents weren't quite likely to happen...

Lin Sanjiu knew that wasn't really possible. The invisible boundary line she could detect through the geographic marker of her [Dog's Frisbee] had extended far beyond their campgrounds. Lin Sanjiu was certain that if she ran to the new boundary and started digging. She would find the same 'white radishes' underground.

Those things seemed to be growing steadily and rapidly.

"Should I call Gong Daoyi over?" Lin Sanjiu thought of the only person she could contact now. "He is quite formidable, so he should at least be able to defend himself..." She faced the patch of white radish and took out the paper crane. She rubbed it in her palms a few times, not knowing why she was feeling hesitant.

The radioactive clouds weren't that thick today. The sun hung high in the sky, basking the strange landscape below with its warm sun rays, and even the 'white radishes' looked 'fresh and juicy'.

Under this sunlight, it was relatively obvious if a few long shadows suddenly appeared beside her. Lin Sanjiu immediately leaped up. When she turned to look around, she was already armed with her saber. No matter who they were, with the capabilities to approach her silently, she knew that they wouldn't be dealt with easily. Yet, the instant she saw the uninvited visitors, she let out a sigh of relief. Lin Sanjiu did not expect that she would actually recognize them. It was no wonder they made no sound nor

greeting when they approached her.

"Why are you guys here?" Lin Sanjiu had no ill will against them, but she had no choice but to keep her guard up. "Did Nüwa sent you guys to attack me again?"

The two figures, two-meters tall, had two additional pairs of arms sticking from their torsos and almond-shaped heads. They were two of the Neuhumes that Nüwa had created, Montesquieu and Aristotle.

Montesquieu seemed to understand what she meant, so he shook his head lightly but clearly delivered his meaning. Under the sun, his grayish-green skin shone with a luster, which reminded Lin Sanjiu of a dolphin. Perhaps, she had endured too much stress alone. When she first saw the sages, it was surprising for her that she felt some sense of closeness to them. "Then, why are you here? If other posthumans see you, they will think that you are duoluozhongs and attack you."

Judging from Nüwa's past actions, she was evidently hiding them at the top of the black tower. It wasn't clear why the sages could walk openly outside now.

Aristotle nodded his head as he listened, Lin Sanjiu was not sure if he was agreeing with her or showing appreciation for her concern. After that, Montesquieu drew out a folded piece of paper from his belt pocket and handed it to Lin Sanjiu.

Chapter 164: Let's Talk About the Next Destination Later

The size of the paper was slightly different from the standard size of papers from Lin Sanjiu's world. Other than that, there wasn't anything extraordinary about the blue piece of paper that Montesquieu was holding.

Lin Sanjiu was puzzled as she took the letter from Montesquieu. She kept her saber and unfolded the paper. The good thing about dealing with these sages was that she wouldn't have to worry that they would launch a sneak attack even if her relationship with them was ambiguous.

While she unfolded the paper and read the words, Montesquieu and Aristotle crossed their two pairs of arms and waited for her silently. Their temperaments were as calm as a pool of deep water.

After some time, Lin Sanjiu suddenly gripped the paper in her hands tightly and steadied her breathing. It took some effort to calm herself down before she storing the letter. Then, she looked at the sages.

"I... I don't quite understand." Lin Sanjiu sounded hesitant when she uttered those words. She wasn't so much directing the words to the sages but muttering to herself. "What does Nüwa mean by 'it's time'?"

The letter was written by Nüwa.

Under the scorching rays of the midday sun, Nüwa's unruly, illegible handwriting looked rather faint. After scanning through the letter quickly, Lin Sanjiu realized she didn't understand the content. She had no choice but to re-read the letter.

"Hello, Lin Sanjiu. Let my words represent me. Recently, the weather has been good. If you had a Geiger counter with you, you would have discovered that the background radiation levels had

dropped by quite a few sieverts. This is a good sign. This time, I sent Montesquieu and Aristotle to deliver my letter because I know that you didn't interact much with them. I hope you can be friends with them.

"How is everything recently? I must mention this. It appears that you have left quite a few companions in the vicinity of the former Garden of Eden. They have caused quite a disturbance and it somewhat reminds me of the Lunar New Year Tournament. But, of course, my friend, this isn't your fault. Time will resolve all these little issues.

"It's a great day today. I am overjoyed. St. Peter and the others are also very happy. This is the first time since their creation that they are able to walk on this earth. Even though they don't have complete freedom now, there will be more of such days in the future, because... it is time.

"Although I don't want to make myself out as a savior, my friend, the reason you can read this letter is all thanks to me.

"I wrote this letter as a farewell. I am leaving this place now. In the future, this place will be the home to St. Peter and the others. If you still remember the conversation we had at the top of the tower, you should know where I am heading. I hope to see you there one day."

Nothing in the world could be as incomprehensible and unintelligible as the letter she had just read.

However, it was useless asking Montesquieu and Aristotle anything. The letter already stated everything clearly. Both Neuhumes were just waiting for Lin Sanjiu to say a word...

"Did you bring that thing with you?" Lin Sanjiu's throat felt dry.

Montesquieu nodded, looking calm and gentle. He carefully opened his cowboy-style belt pocket, took out a small piece of paper, and handed it to Lin Sanjiu.

In the last portion of Nüwa's letter, she had concluded with the following sentence: "I'm leaving soon and we might not meet in the foreseeable future. As a sign of goodwill, I'm giving you a visa as a gift. Even though I'm not a Consular Officer, I have obtained their ability through my research in the past ten years. Please don't stand on ceremony and kindly accept it."

When Lin Sanjiu received that feather-light piece of paper, her fingers trembled slightly. She stared blankly at the visa for a long time before she finally stored it. At that moment, both Montesquieu and Aristotle took a step forward, as if chivalrous knights who finally spotted the right opportunity.

"Um? Wh-what are you trying to do?" Lin Sanjiu was at a loss as she looked at the Neuhumes in front of her. They stood directly in front of her, and their tall stature blocked most of her view. Montesquieu raised one of his hands and touched his own forehead. Then, he softly touched the spot between Lin Sanjiu's brows. Following which, he retreated to one side. After that, Aristotle followed suit.

When they had done all that, as if they felt they had done enough, they turned away and left.

"Is this some sort of farewell etiquette?" Lin Sanjiu stroked the area touched by them. It was almost as if she could still feel the warm sensation from their touch. Neuhumes' skins were far more slippery than any soap or seawater. Just a light direct contact with their skins was an indescribable sensation.

Lin Sanjiu was overwhelmed by the amount of information she received in these short ten minutes. She was stunned for quite some time before she remembered her current predicament. She wanted to quickly return to her digging but when she looked up, she felt her heart rising to her throat.

The sages didn't walk fast and were currently still in sight. They took a straight path when they walked away. Their path crossed

the areas with the strange exposed roots that Lin Sanjiu had dug open. She wanted to yell out to warn them but it was too late. One of Aristotle's foot had already come in contact with the white rhizomes just when Lin Sanjiu was about to open her mouth.

"Look out!" Lin Sanjiu called out urgently, secretly regretting that she had not warned them in advance. Even if they were not humans, she didn't dislike them. Just as she was about to rush over to save them, she stopped abruptly, shocked by the scene before her.

When Aristotle stepped on the patch of 'white radishes', a wide slit appeared on one of the radishes. But this time, before any probing roots stuck out from the slit, it quickly sealed its epidermis disinterestedly. Though the process seemed like the radish just vibrated a little, in the eyes of Lin Sanjiu, who had been dealing with it the whole day, it was tantamount to a bolt from the blue.

Watching the two sages gradually walking away, Lin Sanjiu sat on the ground with a thud. The 'white radishes' around her had no interest in her; they didn't even vibrate a little, appearing almost like they were non-living things.

With quivering fingers, Lin Sanjiu fished out Nüwa's letter from the pocket in her pants. Perhaps, she was too shocked, so she tried it several times before she finally managed to take it out. She flattened it on the ground. Now that she reread the letter, she finally got the gist of it.

Although Nüwa didn't specifically mention about it in her letter, it was evident that the 'white radish' was some sort of organism that would drag other living organisms into itself, just as she guessed. Neither humans, birds nor insects could escape its grasp. However, from the scene which just unfolded in front of her, Neuhumes, the creation of Nüwa, could peacefully coexist with those 'white radishes' for some unknown reason.

There was no doubt that Nüwa's words—"it is time" and "they can

finally roam free’— referred to this situation. No matter how formidable posthumans were, if they walked around here, they would definitely be in trouble. This meant that the entire Garden of Eden would belong to the Neuhumes and the ‘white radishes’. And of course, this was the reason why they no longer had to conceal themselves and could begin living freely!

As Nüwa was a human herself, living in this world was too dangerous, so she had already planned to leave this world to head to the place she mentioned to Lin Sanjiu before.

If that was the case, Lin Sanjiu couldn’t understand why she would enjoy the same treatments as the sages. Nüwa stated in her letter that this was thanks to her... [What in the world did she do to my body?] Lin Sanjiu shuddered as she thought about it, she could even feel the hairs behind her neck standing.

On top of that, how could Montesquieu and Aristotle find her so easily in this large world? She remembered an episode of Animal Planet where some animals could instinctively locate their companions based on their body system. She didn’t dare to think too deeply into it.

Despite the warm rays of the sun, Lin Sanjiu felt a chill through her body. She wished she could dissect herself to carefully examine her entire body. She sat in the same spot for a long time before she could finally calm herself. A sudden thought which came to her saved her from her panicked state: No matter what Nüwa did to her, she would always have the heart of a human. Her fear of becoming one of those Neuhumes was proof of that!

As long as her brain was hers, she could mull over other matters later. With this in mind, Lin Sanjiu wasn’t sure how she managed to stand. She grabbed the board she had used for digging and started her silent excavation once more.

Before she started, she even managed to deliver a message to Gong Daoyi using the paper crane, saying, "Stop looking for a

Consular Officer. Before you get sent off to another world, please stay aloft and avoid touching the ground."

She had a different mindset when she started digging this time. If someone as enigmatic and wise as Nüwa had chosen to escape to another world, did B.Rabbit and the rest who had been caught by those 'white radishes' really had a chance of survival?

"I need to see them," she mumbled. Her tone grew fiercer and almost as if a display of strength, she roared, "Dead or alive!" She might not know which direction to dig, and did not have a clue where they could be... but, Lin Sanjiu was determined not to give up. She felt that if she gave up, B.Rabbit and the others would have no chance of survival. She was even prepared to dig continuously until the very day when she would be sent away. Whenever she dug up a patch of 'white radishes' and confirmed that no one was inside of it, Lin Sanjiu would activate [Mosaic Censorship], blasting the radishes along with the soil into flying bits. Mucous slime, roots, and soil quickly covered her body. But she continued digging as if she felt nothing.

Not only was the area covered by white rhizomes broad, but it was also deep. Lin Sanjiu dug downward along the entire network of roots. When the stars and moon were high up in the sky, she had already dug a large pit, more than ten meters deep. Even so, the network of radishes continued extending downward.

Meanwhile, she had already seen many bizarre creatures trapped within these radishes, she even saw two duoluozhongs which had been dead for a long time. The only thing she didn't see were humans.

When Lin Sanjiu spotted another duoluozhong which had died with its eyes open, she finally succumbed to her hunger and thirst and had to stop. She took out some food and water and began eating in a daze. Eating in front of a duoluozhong's rotten face wasn't the best dining experience, but she couldn't care less now. But as she ate, the duoluozhong in the 'white radish' suddenly

moved.

Chapter 165: Eating Assorted Seafood Noodles Brings Hope

Lin Sanjiu was certain of what she saw. That thing did move.

The cup noodles she had taken from the Garden of Eden city, from a brand called Fruit of Knowledge, was still half full. In an instant, the cup noodles along with her fork disappeared from her hands. Lin Sanjiu leaped up and took two steps forward. She stood cautiously in front of the duoluozhong.

However, it was a cloudless night, and everything around her was shrouded in darkness, so she could barely see her surroundings. The faint light from the night sky reflected off the ‘white radish’, giving it a bluish tint. As darkness fell, she could no longer see the face of the encased duoluozhong clearly. She could only make out its vague outline.

After a while, the shadow inside the radish stopped moving.

When there was still some light, Lin Sanjiu had already partly examined the duoluozhong’s appearance. She assumed that it was dead because almost half of its face had already disintegrated, showing a huge chunk of its deformed skull.

Lin Sanjiu thought for a second and took out her [Ability Polishing Agent]. She illuminated the ‘white radish’ with the silver light from her [Ability Polishing Agent] and narrowed her eyes.

"Huh?"

When she took a closer look, she was so startled that she almost dropped her [Ability Polishing Agent]. Right after that, her body reacted even quicker than her brain. Lin Sanjiu grabbed the board used for digging and thrust it violently into the ground. Then, she dug out that ‘white radish’ quickly.

After she carefully estimated the distance, Lin Sanjiu placed both her hands some distance from the shadowy figure and activated

her [Mosaic Censorship]. There was a loud explosion accompanied by countless flying bits of roots and slime. The humanoid shadow slipped out from the hole in the white radish and slid to the ground.

"Hey, wake up!" Seeing a glimmer of hope, her voice grew a few pitch higher due to her excitement. She rushed over to the person and dragged him out from the puddle of slime. She slapped his face a few times, asking, "Are you still alive? Wake up!"

A young stranger laid in her arms. His clothes had been reduced to a few damp strips of cloth which clung to his body. His face was a little too small for a male, and his eyes were tightly shut. His face was covered with slime and thin strands of roots, and his chest wasn't moving. Lin Sanjiu did not know first aid, she only saw it on TV. However, without much of a choice, she tried her best to imitate what she remembered from TV and pressed her hands down on the stranger's naked chest. She gave it a few compressions, though she honestly didn't know what she was doing.

Unexpectedly, her desperate attempts at saving him through her random chest compressions worked. The man began to stir. She felt his chest quiver slightly. Following which, the young man coughed violently. "Blergh..." the young man turned his head and vomited.

Lin Sanjiu quickly stopped and looked. The pool of vomit was surprisingly familiar. There were many strands of maggot-like thin roots wiggling on the ground. What else could it be other than the slime from the radish?

Before the young man opened his eyes fully, he was clearly tormented by whatever was in his chest and respiratory tract. His face was red and while he continued vomiting, he subconsciously started pulling and digging whatever was in his mouth, ears, and nose. Long strands of white roots poured out from his orifices, like startled worms abandoning their nests, and 'swam' towards the

nearest 'white radish' hurriedly. The gruesome performance continued for three whole minutes.

Lin Sanjiu felt she would never be able to erase the image of those long thin roots pouring out from the young man's nostrils from her memory. Enduring the goosebumps all over her body, she took out her saber and started slicing the things on the ground.

Unfortunately, the roots were too fine for the saber. On top of that, they seemed to have a mind of their own and dodged the blade of the saber agilely. After some effort, Lin Sanjiu only managed to cut a small bunch of those things.

"Stop... stop cutting," the young man behind her suddenly spoke. His voice was hoarse as if his throat had been badly damaged. "There is too much, it's useless..."

Lin Sanjiu turned around swiftly and stared hard at him. She was totally unaware of the anxiety and hope on her face.

"Are you feeling better?" She gulped a mouthful of saliva. "How did you get inside? What is this thing?"

The young man laid on the ground. After some time, he forced himself up and leaned on the rock which Lin Sanjiu was sitting on previously when she was eating her noodles. He panted heavily and said, "Thanks... for rescuing me. You saved my life..." He vomited so much that his lips were white but he did not forget to show her gratitude. "What's wrong with this world? This happened as soon as I entered this world. How scary..."

He was the unlucky chap who fell down from the sky.

According to Snow, he was probably on higher ground before he was transported to this world so he fainted when he reached this world. Before he could regain consciousness, he had already been dragged into a white radish. Thus, this was the first time he had a good look at this world.

"Do you know what this is?" Lin Sanjiu nearly died of anxiety

because of him. If he had a shirt with a collar, she would have grabbed it. "And, how did you reach this place? Are we far from where you disappeared? And, I looked carefully just now. A duoluozhong was previously in that spot, and not you!"

The young man was stunned. After hearing Lin Sanjiu's brief explanation, he finally found out that she had seen him when he was unconscious. He coughed a few times and relaxed a little before he answered, "I don't know what this is. When I was still in a daze, I felt many tentacles-like things burrowing into my nostrils and throat... I barely had enough air and it was hard to breathe. I'm only here because of my ability..."

[The Great Reversal Technique]

The name of this ability comes from a novel by the famous Wuxia author, Jin Yong. It even works in almost the same way. It makes one suspect if the owner of this ability normally lacks creativity.

Effect: This ability had been leveled up once. Currently, the user can exchange position with any target within a 250-meter radius. This can be an object or a living thing. As long as the target is around the same size as the user, the exchange will succeed. But take note, if the target is a human and had never heard of that famous Wuxia novelist, the exchange will fail.

In other words, this ability depends wholly on the popularity of that famous wuxia novelist across the millions and millions of parallel worlds...

Lin Sanjiu found it rather unbelievable that the young man actually told her everything about his ability, perhaps because she had saved his life.

"Due to oxygen deprivation, I couldn't think clearly... I didn't dare to open my eyes because I was scared those things would burrow into my eyeballs. While I endured the weird itchiness of those things crawling into my nose and ears, I forced myself to stay conscious while I maintained my ability active..."

This young man, Qian Zhengguan, had lingering fears as he described his experiences in the 'white radish'. His face was pale-white and he had a nauseated face.

Lin Sanjiu tried to be patient while she listened but, finally, she couldn't resist interrupting, "My nine friends disappeared in this vicinity. I think they encountered the same situation as you. Think carefully again. When you activated your ability, did you detect any living humans nearby?"

"That's why you were digging here!" Qian Zhengguan was astounded and quickly lamented, "You're lucky to have so many friends. Unlike me... Oh, I know. Don't panic. Let me think..."

The young man seemed to be a slowcoach and, among all the people she knew, his unfocused line of thoughts could be considered one of the worst. He easily strayed from the topic and she had to pull his attention back constantly. This made her even more impatient.

When he was in the white radish, Qian Zhengguan activated his ability more than a few dozen times, so it was hard for him to recall his experience each time. In the end, he finally remembered after some effort, "Yes... There was one. It was between my 20th and 30th activation. I detected someone within 250 meters from me. I wanted to swap my position with that person... but the person had never heard of Jin Yong before. The exchange failed. Could that person be a foreigner?"

Lin Sanjiu quickly stood up, "Do you remember where it is?"

Qian Zhengguan was just about to show her a puzzled face but when he was scared by her expression and quickly changed his tone, "I could travel through the same route, working my way backward. But there are two problems now..."

"What is it?"

"The slime within the network of rhizomes is constantly flowing.

When I was inside, it kept pushing me forward. Even if I find that particular position, the person might not be in the same spot..."

For Lin Sanjiu, that wasn't even a problem, "I still want to try! What is the second problem?"

"This thing is too terrifying." Fear filled Qian Zhengguan's small face. "I activated my ability like crazy down there, but I just couldn't get back up to the surface. You mentioned that a single contact would pull a person in there, I'm afraid I'll—"

Before he could finish his sentence, Lin Sanjiu grabbed his arm and before he could react, Qian Zhengguan felt his vision turning upside down. Lin Sanjiu tossed him, a 1.7 m man, on her shoulder, and carried him like a pig.

"Lead the way!" Lin Sanjiu shouted. As he let out a miserable shriek, she jumped onto the network of 'white radishes'.

Qian Zhengguan was so shocked that his heart nearly jumped out of his chest. He closed his eyes tightly. But when he opened them again, he realized that he was alright. With a trembling voice, his voice was faltering as he spoke into Lin Sanjiu's ears, "There, you have to turn right... Why isn't anything happening to you? Um, yes, I swapped positions with a dead person here..."

Ever since she evolved, this was the first time she ran this fast. After hearing that fellow on her shoulder giving directions unhurriedly, she actually could increase his speed further.

"Um, I think the slime is slightly corrosive... My clothes weren't like this before..."

Chapter 166: The Prison Warden and The Tree Roots

Imperceptibly, the proliferation of the 'white radishes' had far exceeded Lin Sanjiu's imagination.

After running multiple 250-meters distances, she was already very far from the initial campsite. If Lin Sanjiu had to turn back now, she probably couldn't even find the right direction.

She did not meet a single living creature within this vast area. Even posthumans with their remarkable abilities were nowhere to be seen. They were probably caught off guard and had all fell into the radishes' snare.

Lin Sanjiu couldn't help feeling a little worried. Even if Gong Daoyi was powerful, he couldn't fly. After she had sent out that paper crane, she had yet to receive a reply and she couldn't help wondering how he was now.

"Hey, I think my pants are going to fall off soon. Can you think of a way to let me adjust them?"

She heard a sentence coming from the back of her head, and it immediately extinguished her anxious thoughts. She waved her hand, and her [Bubbles Blowing Girl] landed on the ground with a thud, stirring up a cloud of dust. "Climb up there to adjust your pants," she grumbled.

The numerous tiny roots which probed out from the soil touched the [Bubbles Blowing Girl] for a mere second before rapidly withdrawing back into the soil. If Qian Zhengguan didn't take note of them specifically, they would have been overlooked, especially under the cover of night.

With his forehead drenched in cold sweat, he clung onto the large robotic doll. After he climbed up the doll and adjusted his pants, which were actually in shreds, he turned his attention to the doll.

"Ah, the design of this item is pretty intriguing, what does it do?"

"Let's keep the nonsense for later. Is that person in this area?" Lin Sanjiu asked as she grabbed her 'digging board'.

"Um, let me think. Which direction does the slime flow?"

Lin Sanjiu curbed her anxiety and waited wordlessly.

"I think it moves in that direction..." After he corrected himself a few times hesitantly, he finally confirmed the direction. "But then again, isn't it incredible that the slime flows around like that..."

Lin Sanjiu ignored what he had to say. According to the direction he provided, she thrust the board into the ground and flung a clump of soil behind her. The white radishes here were even more prolific than those back at the campground. The number of thin roots was, at the very least, a few times greater. Once Lin Sanjiu broke through the surface of the ground, those rampant strands of roots sprouted from the ground, probing and swaying in midair aggressively. If Lin Sanjiu used her saber now, she could easily cut down countless of them.

"Uh, it is best not to cut them..." A faltering voice came from where the robot doll was. Lin Sanjiu knew that Qian Zhengguan's face was pale even without turning to look at him. "Look at those roots..."

Lin Sanjiu lowered her head and scrutinized the ground scattered with those roots she had cut. They wiggled nimbly and burrowed back into the soil, disappearing.

"What the heck are those radishes!" Lin Sanjiu spat, "They're everywhere and they're really creepy..."

Digging downwards. That was her only chance of figuring that answer. While Lin Sanjiu spoke, she dug faster. Within a few minutes, the patch of radishes here were gradually exposed under the moonlight. Perhaps, the white radishes had been growing here for a longer period of time, so they had swallowed many more

creatures. Lin Sanjiu spotted a faint dark shadow encased within their hardened epidermises almost every few steps. Some of the shadows were circular clumps, others were long and thin... hardly anything was discernible. However, there wasn't a single shadow resembling a human silhouette.

Lin Sanjiu took a deep breath, she forced herself to swallow her disappointment. As before, she placed her hands on the radishes, planning to blast the entire layer of radishes which did not contain any humans. If she didn't do so, the white radishes underneath would be completely buried under those above. If she couldn't survey the situation properly, digging wasn't the best option.

After she activated her [Mosaic Censorship], it was as if she had detonated a small explosive. The explosion sent shreds of epidermises, slime, roots, and chunks of those black shadows, which were long dead, flying into the air. Then, they fell down like rain upon the ground.

As the nearest person in the vicinity, Lin Sanjiu was obviously drenched. However, she was already used to this, she had already gotten used to being filthy. She closed her eyes tightly and waited for it to be over.

"What is that?"

While she wiped her face, Qian Zhengguan's voice suddenly came from behind her, "Why are there steel pipes here? Look at that, are those steel pipes?"

[Can those white radishes change their food preferences?] Lin Sanjiu turned to look behind, feeling a little skeptical. She gave it a single glance and immediately froze. There was a metal railing on the ground, it shone with a metallic luster under the moonlight. She knew where she had seen that before—she had seen the same metal railing when Hui Chuyan was accidentally trapped behind it. At that time, it was as if she was trapped in another dimension. They spend a considerable amount of effort to catch Green Melon.

Lin Sanjiu felt her heart racing. She raced up to the metal railing and reached out to grab it. She was shocked when she realized that she could easily hold onto it, without any obstruction.

But, of course, the area behind the railing was empty.

The metal railing didn't seem worthy of any attention, but Lin Sanjiu held on to it tightly. She crooked her head and examined it but she couldn't hear anything from it.

In the pitch darkness of the night, the only other living person stopped moving... Qian Zhengguan quickly grew afraid. Since he was behind Lin Sanjiu, he couldn't see her expression. After contemplating for quite some time, he gathered his courage and asked, "Erm, what are you doing? Can you say something..."

It was fine when he didn't speak. Ironically, once he spoke, the surrounding seemed to fall into a deeper silence.

The night wind bellowed. The woman in front of him remained frozen. She did not move a single inch. Qian Zhengguan stared at her blankly. If anything were to happen to Lin Sanjiu, he would be trapped on this robot doll for the next 14 months...

Nevertheless, he wasn't that unlucky. Lin Sanjiu inhaled deeply and suddenly started moving again. She reached behind the metal railings, and in that split second, she literally pulled a person out from thin air. Qian Zhengguan nearly slid down the robot doll. When he finally regained his grip on the doll, he saw a short teenager covered in slime.

"Cough! Sister Lin, Sister Lin! Is that you?" The teenager was evidently in a better condition than Qian Zhengguan's previous state. A few sparse strands of roots crawled out from his nose, mouth, and ears. He was fully conscious, but his natural drake-like voice sounded coarser than Qian Zhengguan's damaged voice. "How-how terrifying... I thought I would never get out..."

It was Green Melon.

"Why is your ability so weird?" Lin Sanjiu complained but she noticed the roots from the white radishes reacting when Green Melon had just stepped out. Shocked, she threw the teen over to the robot doll hastily. With that, the kindergartener had one male sitting on each of her shoulders.

The reason Green Melon could survive up till now was all thanks to his ability.

[The Reasonable Prison Warden]

Oh my... Your request isn't that simple. Recently, management has been strict... As you know, once a person is sentenced to jail, once he is behind bars... it isn't that easy to get him out... We have to follow the regulations!

But, of course, this depends on how you want to settle matters... Look, you can visit the prisoner sometimes, and sometimes, he will be imprisoned in a deeper place... Oh, what are you doing? No, I can't take this from you. Ah, I understand... He has been slightly wronged...

Cough, the law is not without mercy! I'm a compassionate person. How about this? I heard that this prisoner's body condition isn't quite well, so I'll get him released for medical treatment!

Description: The space behind the metal railing is a dimensional "prison". Although it is summoned through the user's ability, and the imprisonment and release of the targets are determined by the user, it is guarded by a reasonable prison warden. If his request is fulfilled, it is possible to meet, communicate and contact the prisoner. It is even possible to get the prisoner released.

PS: Any violent attempts to break into this prison would cause the prisoner to be forcefully thrown into a deeper dimension with a sentence of a hundred years.

"If it wasn't for my quick-thinking, I would probably be dead if I

didn't lock myself in the dimensional prison..." Green Melon was still traumatized by his experience, "Did you also save this big brother, Sister Lin? Just moments ago, I don't even know when I could be released, I... I'm really..."

While Lin Sanjiu continued digging, her face darkened.

"Your ability really does show the 'national culture' of your world..." She paused as she remembered her one-minute conversation with the prison warden. She couldn't help asking, "What did he take from me anyway? I check all my items, I still have them."

"Ugh." Green Melon uttered and scratched his head in embarrassment.

"The prison warden took... took away some of your potential growth value..." He was so ashamed that his face was as red as a cooked lobster. "But he didn't take that much. It is only 1%. I had only ever received two points of potential growth value... I will look at the amount later... Sister Lin, I will definitely repay you for saving me!"

Nüwa once made a passing remark that a person's potential growth value was a sort of mental strength—who would know it was something that could be taken away. Compared to rescuing a person, Lin Sanjiu wasn't too concerned about the loss of that bit of potential growth value. She patted Green Melon's shoulders to get him to relax. With three of them together, they began studying the location of others.

Since Green Melon was in his prison dimension, he was conscious all this time and could see what was happening outside his dimension. Thus, he was of great help, "Despite the flowing fluid, the speed isn't that fast. I think it moves about one kilometer per hour? I'm not certain as I don't have a reference point... But, the problem lies with the complexity of this intricate network... I am not sure which roots the rest are transport to..."

"Roots?" Lin Sanjiu found Green Melon's description of the white rhizomes a bit strange.

"Don't you know?" Green Melon's eyes widened. "These are all tree roots."

Chapter 167: I've Actually Read Jin Yong's Works

There were many superfluous facts in this world. For example, roots grew out from trees. The presence of roots would also mean that there would definitely be trees.

Lin Sanjiu straightened her back. Gazing far into the distance, she only saw a boundless wilderness, littered with a few miserable ruins and sparse patches of vegetation.

If these 'white radishes', which spread over hundreds of kilometers, were all tree roots, then—

"Where is the tree?"

As that question surfaced in Lin Sanjiu's mind, Gong Daoyi, who was far away, asked the same question. His slightly feminine face revealed a rare hint of confusion, somehow giving him a child-like aura.

Hearing that question, a person standing nearby slowly turned around.

The building Gong Daoyi was in had only half its original height. The erosion over the years also damaged most of its walls. Right now, the single somewhat complete room in the building was where these two people were standing.

Through the windows, the moonlight illuminated her soft, gentle, undisturbed brows. Although she looked to be only around thirty years old, a few faint crow's feet appeared every time she made an expression. The faint wrinkles bestowed a particular charm upon her whenever she smiled with her red lips.

"It's right here." The unfamiliar-looking lady pointed at the ground below her feet while smiling.

After conversing with her for some time, Gong Daoyi had gotten

some grasp of her personality. Whenever he got an ambiguous answer from her, he knew he couldn't get her to disclose more, regardless how hard he tried to get to the bottom of matters.

He hesitated and decided to change the topic.

"I never knew this was your true identity..."

Gong Daoyi intentionally slowed down his speech when he uttered the next half of his sentence from his beautifully shaped lips, "Should I refer to you as... Nüwa?"

Nüwa nodded in the dim light of night and smiled approvingly. "This is how I actually look. I never expected that I would meet someone who shares my views in this world. On some level, I would consider you to be my junior, right?"

Gong Daoyi's loose fringe hid his slightly knitted brows. He didn't really feel any aversion toward her comment, but rather he found it perplexing.

"No, I don't think I agree with you entirely." His words sounded gentle and very ambiguous, but very pleasant. "I am an optimist." Even though he quickly rejected her comments, Nüwa wasn't angry. She smiled at him with a magnanimous smile, looking at him as if he was a child still groping around, finding his way. Both of them stood silently for some time before Nüwa whipped out a piece of paper abruptly and handed it to Gong Daoyi.

"Aren't you looking for this? Here." She held out a piece of thick paper, the words embossed on it had a shimmery glow. There was an eye-catching 'VISA' on the piece on the paper. "She is my important observation subject, don't mess things up when you get there."

"I won't, of course." Gong Daoyi took the visa from her and looked at the destination column: 'Agriculture Farm'. "Did you give her a visa with the same destination?" he couldn't help asking, crooking his head.

"Yes, I only have two visas for this destination."

Gong Daoyi nodded his head to express his gratitude and kept the visa, before heaving a reluctant sigh, "It's quite unbelievable that you are able to induce and develop the Consular Officer's ability."

Nüwa flashed a faint smile, giving no explanation, and shifted her gaze to the distant land. She looked for a few seconds, and suddenly she revealed a stunned expression. Sounding a little taken aback, she exclaimed, "They're spreading fast!"

"What?"

"Just a moment ago, the growth rate of the tree roots doubled. They've crossed over another node. It won't be long before this entire planet is covered with tree roots... I need to go." Surprisingly, Nüwa even sounded a little moved, "In the future, nine out of ten posthumans probably won't survive when they arrive here. Mankind's survival is harder by the day."

Gong Daoyi opened his mouth, intending to say something, but, when he turned around after hearing the fleeting intonation of her last sentence, he found that Nüwa had already disappeared. He didn't even realize when or how she left.

He gathered his fringe and combed it backward. Staring at the ground below, he couldn't see any trace of those tree roots extending. But, he didn't plan to verify what Nüwa said. Letting out a faint sigh, Gong Daoyi sat cross-legged on the edge of the broken floor while he toyed with the visa he just obtained.

...

"Agriculture Farm... what kind of world would it be?" Green Melon muttered, directing the question at no one in particular, while he looked at the visa in his hand. As Qian Zhengguan and himself didn't dare to even get down from the robot, they were basically useless. Lin Sanjiu had no choice but to rely on herself. She continued digging in the previous direction without any rest.

"Sister Lin, if we really can't get any visas, you should just use this card for yourself. Since it is called 'Agriculture Farm', it probably wouldn't have a shortage of food..." Green Melon sighed when he thought of this, "I wonder how my Boss and the others are..."

He could only see Lin Sanjiu figure sinking down and did not know if she didn't hear him or chose not to respond. He only knew that the hole she was digging was getting deeper.

"Hey, what world are you from? You haven't heard of Jin Yong?" Qian Zhengguan, who was sitting on the robot doll's other shoulders, suddenly looked over at him and asked a question which had been bothering him for some time..

However, he was shocked when he heard Green Melon's reply. "Huh? I've read Jin Yong's novel! Isn't he the guy who wrote chivalric romance a few hundred years ago... His novel, 'Swan Sword', is especially well-written..."

Qian Zhengguan stared at him with dropped jaws.

The details about Jin Yong weren't what shocked him. There are countless parallel worlds with infinite possibilities of events, so it wasn't surprising that there could be all versions of Jin Yong. Qian Zhengguan quickly turned to Lin Sanjiu and strained his already damaged vocal cords, shouting in her direction, "Sister Lin! Sister Lin!

"This fellow knows Jin Yong! He definitely isn't the one I tried changing locations with! Continue digging down that direction from before; there's definitely someone who've never heard of Jin Yong there!" Qian Zhengguan was very excited. To prove his point, he even swapped places with Green Melon a few times. The latter was confused but quickly realized he had switched a few times from the robot doll's left shoulder to the right. He nearly fell off from fright.

Once Lin Sanjiu's heard him, she instantly felt recharged and

acknowledged him loudly. She found the area where Green Melon was previously and she picked up her pace. Sure enough, she dug out another thick tree root with an encased black figure.

This time, the person who fell out was Bai Xiaoke.

Bai Xiaoke was small and petite. Usually, she would complain that she didn't look imposing enough. But this time, her small stature saved her life. Her tall, muscular escort curled up like a ball, wrapping her tightly in his arms, providing superb protection. He enveloped her head in his huge hands, so not many thin roots could reach her.

When she hit the ground, Lin Sanjiu quickly woke her up from her short oxygen-deprived coma. She was alright, but her escort's skin was badly damaged as he didn't wear any clothes. Bai Xiaoke had no choice but to dismiss her escort.

"Xiao Jiu..."

Due to the insufficient space on the robot doll, Green Melon got Bai Xiaoke to wear his [Cloud Mimicry Raincoat] and let her float up to the sky like a kite. Panting heavily as she continued digging, Lin Sanjiu heard Bai Xiaoke sobbing above her head.

"You're so good. You never gave up looking for us... I'm sure everyone would be found..."

As the number of people she found increased, Lin Sanjiu gradually felt less anxious. She wiped her sweat and even found time to look upward, smiling at Bai Xiaoke, "Don't cry, your tears are falling on me. If you are feeling better, why don't you tell me what happened underground?"

Lin Sanjiu heard Bai Xiaoke replying overhead with an "okay".

After some questioning and comparing Green Melon's, Qian Zhengguan's and now Bai Xiaoke's description, Lin Sanjiu discovered that they all mentioned a common phrase, "It seems to be heading downward..."

"Heading down? What's down there?"

Chapter 168: Lin Sanjiu likes <The Smiling, Proud Wanderer>

As the hole in the ground got deeper, Lin Sanjiu's efforts gradually seemed insufficient. After all, she was just a one-man team with one pair of hands. She needed time to rest. When she stopped to eat and sleep, Green Melon and the others would operate her [Bubbles Blowing Girl], blowing up the ground with some small explosions.

That task wasn't that easy either. They had to be mindful at all times to avoid blasting any possible survivors in the roots. On top of that, they could only maneuver around walking on the tall makeshift platforms they had planted on the ground. After four days, they saved a few strangers, but they didn't find a single trace of B.Rabbit and the rest of their companions.

As time passed, the possibility that they were still alive grew smaller and smaller.

"We can't continue like this... There are too many roots, and they're too deep. There is no end to this," Lin Sanjiu commented despondently. She leaned on a large root and slipped to the ground, sitting. She felt physically and emotionally exhausted.

After four days of digging and blasting, this area of almost a kilometer radius had completely changed.

The spot where Lin Sanjiu first started digging was now an entrance which could fit two people. Past the entrance, the path sloped downward steeply.

If someone were to walk down this path for a few hundred meters, the person would suddenly feel as though he or she was in a forest. Perhaps, the word 'forest' wasn't the right description. Until today, no human has coined a term to describe a forest created by large intertwining snake-like roots. Looking up, a

network of large roots blocked a large portion of the sky. Thus, the path was always dark. Both sides of the path were covered by roots which had not been destroyed. Each of these roots had the girth of approximately the circumference of ten people in a group hug. They crisscrossed and intertwined. Once they sensed any movement, the 'walls' of roots would start vibrating rapidly, sprouting waves after waves of long thin probing roots, eager to engulf any surrounding living creatures.

In such an underground mine-like environment, there was barely any natural light. To solve this, Lin Sanjiu hung her [Ability Polishing Agent] on a slender tree root, letting it serve as a lamp. Though that root was thinner than the rest, its girth was almost her size.

Under the [Ability Polishing Agent]'s dim silvery light, both the huge robot doll and the piece of grey cloud floating mid-air sunk into silence as they faced Lin Sanjiu's dejection.

"But-but..." Bai Xiaoke hesitated for a while, not knowing if what she was about to say would encourage or discourage Lin Sanjiu, "we really can't do anything else now..."

The two men sitting on the robot doll's shoulders exchange glances, also feeling rather disheartened.

"Have you guys ever considered how much effort we use?" Lin Sanjiu suddenly questioned them, "Every day, we can only dig about 100 meters or so in one direction, right?"

The grey cloud shook a little as Xiao Baike nodded.

"Right now, we have only been putting those 100 meters downward, ignoring roots that go in other directions. Well, also because we don't have the manpower for that." Perhaps, the few days of repetitive physical activity actually helped Lin Sanjiu clear her mind. Her anxiety over the missing companions gradually ebbed as her rationality slowly took charge again.

"But, what if the roots aren't transporting their 'prey' downward? Three of you were in a life or death situation at that time; it isn't surprising that you guys might have made a mistake in the direction that you were heading in." She raised her brow and continued, "Logically speaking, it shouldn't head downward. Nutrients from the roots are usually transported to the phloem. Even though we don't see the tree trunks yet, shouldn't it go upward?"

Her logic made sense, yet Qian Zhengguan felt that something wasn't quite right. He opened his mouth, wanting to retort, but after hemming and hawing for quite a bit, he couldn't find the words. In the end, his far-fetched thinking gained the upper hand, and he uttered, "If the tree trunk is growing somewhere else, does that mean we have to run around this entire planet?" Now, he was totally stumped.

Green Melon rolled his eyes. Being more quick-witted, he smiled after he thought for a while, "Sister Lin, do you have an idea?"

Lin Sanjiu narrowed her eyes without replying. She tilted her head and looked at all of them. Suddenly, she gestured for Qian Zhengguan, "Come here."

"Wh-why?" the small-faced young male replied as alarm bells in his head started ringing inexplicably. "Sister Lin, what do you want? I can't go down."

The reason was almost sigh-inducing. To launch the explosions while Lin Sanjiu slept, they made quite a few tall makeshift platforms so that they could move around within a certain perimeter.

"Are you coming?" Lin Sanjiu asked bluntly.

Although his answer was a definite "no", Qian Zhengguan realized that he was slipping from the robot doll. With a fretful expression, he asked cautiously, "Sister Lin, what are you planning?"

"I have a question. How much time do you need to activate your [Great Reversal Technique]... Quick, answer me. I'm waiting. Apart from the requirement regarding 'Jin Yong', are there any other prerequisites? Oh god, why are you so slow?"

His sluggish movements could drive anyone mad. In the end, Lin Sanjiu stood up and grabbed him by his collar. Qian Zhengguan did treasure the shirt that Green Melon gave him, so he quickly acknowledged what Lin Sanjiu said and panicked as he stabilized himself on the makeshift platform. After that, he touched his collar and answered, "Umm... The activation time is quite short. Just a thought will do. Other than that 'Jin Yong' requirement, the target has to be around my size, and the person or item shouldn't be too heavy..."

She might be imagining things, but recently, Lin Sanjiu felt that she had grown taller. Standing beside Qian Zhengguan, who was 1.73 meters tall, she seemed almost his height.

[How could I be growing taller at my age? Even if I have evolved, I don't have a height increment ability...] Lin Sanjiu sneered at herself inwardly and asked, "Is my height alright?"

The young man with a small face looked at her and considered for a second before nodding quickly, "Yes. Tall women are popular now. Look at those mistresses..."

"I'm talking about your [Great Reversal Technique] ability! What are you thinking?"

"Oh oh, yes!"

Lin Sanjiu felt more irritable than usual when she had to deal with a scatterbrained slowcoach like Qian Zhengguan. She massaged her temples and placed one hand on Qian Zhengguan's back. Then, she instructed softly, "On a count of three, I'll push you toward that tree root, are you ready?"

"How can I be ready!" Pale-faced, Qian Zhengguan waved his

hand randomly around in a panic, "Sister Lin, what exactly are you trying to do?!"

Lin Sanjiu whispered, "Listen, I will stand on this platform. The second you're completely swallowed by the tree root, you are going to swap places with me.

The idea to let herself be swallowed by those roots sounded too risky so she knew that Bai Xiaoke and Green Melon would never agree with her on doing so. Thus, she never even thought of mentioning it to them. Qian Zhengguan was different. They only got acquainted with each other days ago, and considering his slow and pliable personality, he would probably follow her instructions.

"So, you want to get in there..."

"Yes, as you know, somehow, these tree roots just refuse to pull me in. So, we can't swap places early. You have to swap the very second their epidermis close..." Lin Sanjiu stared into his eyes, a little nervously. Yet, her tone was resolute, giving him little leeway to refuse.

Their conversation was very soft, so Green Melon could barely hear what they were saying. Bai Xiaoke and Green Melon were still in the dark about the situation. They waited for Lin Sanjiu to say something but they only saw her pushing Qian Zhengguan violently toward a nearby root—

Before both of them could cry out, many thin probing roots flew out from the ground and caught Qian Zhengguan. He let out a shriek before he was sucked into the roots entirely. Everything happened quicker than a blink of an eye.

"Now!" Lin Sanjiu bellowed. His screams came to a spontaneous end before the tough epidermis closed. His vision blurred and Qian Zhengguan gasped. He had swapped places with her. He stood on the platform, grabbing his knees for support.

Green Melon and Bai Xiaoke looked over in a daze, just in time to

watch Lin Sanjiu's shadow disappear into the closing thick white epidermis.

Chapter 169: A Bitter Journey Through Culture

[Green Melon and Bai Xiaoke must be anxious and angry now...] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself. The only sound she could hear from within the tree roots was a constant gurgling sound. When Lin Sanjiu opened her eyes, she realized that it wasn't pitch-dark like she imagined. Instead, everything was foggy white. Occasionally, a large mass of thin roots would pass by quickly.

Although she felt a little guilty for making her companions worried, Lin Sanjiu couldn't resist her hunger and started searching for the half-eaten cup noodles from her card inventory. The items which she converted into cards would be preserved in the very state before they were converted. As a result, when she converted the cup noodles back to its original steaming hot form, the fragrance of seafood wafted into her nose. Before she left, Lin Sanjiu hung a backpack full of food, enough for half a month, on the waist of the robot doll so she wasn't worried that the three people outside would starve.

Judging from her body condition, another day had passed since she entered the network of tree roots. When she was first sucked into the root, Lin Sanjiu had the same awful experiences that the others described. Sticky, viscous slime mixed with numerous uncuttable tiny roots assaulted her face, like thick sheets of wet paper. She felt a slight itchy feeling in her ears, eyes, and nose and knew that the roots were trying to burrow into her body.

By then, she had been cut off from the air outside. To get oxygen, she had to inhale deeply to snatch the pockets of oxygen within the slime. Inadvertently, this action also created an unimpeded path for the thin roots. Soon, she felt an intense, burning pain in her lungs. She wondered if something had already burrowed into them.

Thankfully, those things lost interest in her immediately.

As the uncomfortable sensations—the suffocation, burning pain, dampness and odd itchiness—gradually ebbed, she moved her eyes and watched as a thin, long white root peeked out from her nostril. This was accompanied by an unbearable itch before the white root finally swam out from her nose and disappeared into the surrounding white slime.

Noting her ability to suck hot noodles into her mouth calmly after personally witnessing her body on that condition, Lin Sanjiu felt that she grew psychologically stronger once again.

The reason she could eat her noodles leisurely was all thanks to the capsule she kept during the Lunar New Year Tournament.

She converted her capsule into a card to escape from the match back then. As the various events unfolded, she stored more and more items, so she nearly forgot that she had the capsule with her.

If it wasn't for that thought—"It'd be nice if I could place myself in a box"—that drifted into her hazy mind when she was having difficulties breathing, Lin Sanjiu would still be suffering right now.

It was a pleasant surprise for her to discover that the slight corrosive nature of the slime wasn't quite effective against the capsule. After drifting along for quite a long time, the walls of the capsules looked alright with only a few tiny scratches.

Maybe, the roots felt that this capsule with Lin Sanjiu had no nutritional value. As she drifted through the slime, Lin Sanjiu noticed that the slime attempted to push her capsule outward two to three times.

It wasn't easy getting inside, so she wasn't about to let the tree roots 'vomit' her out. Once she realized that her capsule was shaking, she would store her capsule back in her body before taking out her saber. Each time, she would stab her saber into the thick white epidermis to secure her position. After doing that for a

few times, perhaps being able to sense pain, the roots seemed to acknowledge that it could not remove that foreign object so it had no choice but to accept it into the slime again and transport it with the other 'nutrients' toward an unknown direction.

Putting down the empty noodle cup, Lin Sanjiu looked at the rope she tied outside through the capsule's walls. She got that idea not long ago. Observing the movement of the rope, she could judge the direction she was heading. At that moment, the rope was swaying in the slime. Lin Sanjiu looked at it for a while before she caught a hint of its upward movement.

[Does this mean I'm heading downward?]

She looked up with uncertainty. Waves of viscous slime swept past her eyes like a white fog. Although the flow speed wasn't that fast, Lin Sanjiu had already been in the root for an entire day. If the flow speed was 2 kilometers per hour, she was probably 50 to 60 kilometers deep.

However, the white interior of the roots remained unchanged. The slime kept moving downward as if it was heading to the very core of the planet.

In such depths, Lin Sanjiu could do nothing but wait in her capsule. The tree root that accommodated her had become her lifeline: if this tree root was suddenly disappeared, or accidentally pushed her out, Lin Sanjiu would be trapped under the deep dark layers of soil and would be killed by the surrounding pressure before she died of suffocation.

Once she was reminded about that, the little bit of leisure she had while eating that cup noodle disappeared completely. Lin Sanjiu fixated her gaze on the bottom of the capsule and gradually grew neurotic that she might suddenly be pushed outward by the roots if she missed even a slight abnormal movement.

As the fluid flowed, she could only hear the monotonous and repetitive rustling sound outside the capsule. It was as if the view

in front of her was the only thing left in this world. The capsule swayed gently and rhythmically along with the flow. If it wasn't for the strange situation she found herself in, it would be a considerably quiet time for her.

The rustling sound surrounding her seemed to stir the fatigue she had accumulated over the few days. She felt exhausted. Her eyelids were growing heavier by the minute. Lin Sanjiu blinked hard, taking a deep breath. A vague thought began to surface in her mind: [If I sleep, I will still be able to sense the movements from the capsule, right?]

With that, she fell asleep unknowingly.

Didn't she warn herself not to sleep just a second ago? Yet, Lin Sanjiu woke up abruptly when the capsule started shaking. She did not know how long she had been asleep. The capsule quickly stabilized. Apparently, it was just a bit of 'turbulence'. She looked at the empty noodle cup and found that the leftover soup had dried up. Due to her bad sleeping posture, her legs had also gone numb.

"It seems that six or seven hours have passed. Why isn't there any change at all?" she mumbled before turning her head. She was caught off guard when she found herself staring at a deadly white face smiling back at her. Though she had been through a lot, Lin Sanjiu found her hairs standing on end. She suppressed the involuntary scream that nearly escaped from her mouth and stepped backward, only realizing after a second that the human's face was outside her capsule.

Lin Sanjiu stared at it for over ten seconds before she felt her heart calming down. She looked at that face carefully and felt her heart contract. There was only a few pieces of intact skin on the body of this unfamiliar man who was floating beside her capsule. He must have tried to protect his head, so his face was the only part of his body that retained some semblance of its original form. His thoracic and abdominal cavity had been ripped open. The edge of the wounds had been densely covered with tiny semicircles.

Clearly, his skin split open after it had been perforated by many tiny holes. Meanwhile, a few fascia-like objects floated around the body.

The space where his organs should originally be was empty. Lin Sanjiu could even see his backbone. His empty abdominal cavity was only filled with a white substance. She realized that she had mistaken his 'smile' on his face because of the blurred surface of her capsule. Upon closer inspection, the man had a twisted expression before he died.

If B.Rabbit and the others were floating in the root's fluid unprotected, they were probably in the same state as this man. The shock she received had driven away her drowsiness. Lin Sanjiu sat down worriedly, gazing down at her feet in a daze. She tried her best to recall if her companions had any abilities or special items that could serve as protection.

[Huh?] Her train of thoughts stopped as she turned her head. The pale male corpse was still floating leisurely outside her capsule.

[Something isn't right...] Lin Sanjiu tilted her head trying to grasp the fleeting thought in her head. It wasn't all that surprising to see a dead person floating in the roots. After all, these roots had sucked in many organisms. However, she couldn't help noticing a fact...

The dead man wasn't here before.

If it was an object that the same root absorbed, Lin Sanjiu would have seen it earlier. For example, that fat 'free-range chicken' had accompanied her throughout her journey in the roots. As the flow speed of the fluid in the roots was constant throughout the roots, it wasn't possible that an object would slow down or that something would catch up from behind.

She inched forward and looked at the mutilated face once more. Her heart raced as she made a daring assumption. She forced herself to calm down. After waiting for a while, the capsule shook

a few times in succession, as expected.

It wasn't caused by tree roots pushing her out. The jolts continued for quite some time. Sometimes, the jolt only lasted for a second. Lin Sanjiu discovered that the surroundings outside her capsule changed with each jolt. The 'free-range chicken' above her had already been washed away by the random waves to an unknown location. The number of organisms around her capsule began to increase rapidly. The faces that surrounded her capsules belonged to people she did not know. Some of the posthumans seemed alive as they used various methods to protect themselves. One of them had wrapped him or herself with a thick gold ribbon and was now like a mummy. Another person's body was glowing with a black light, so she couldn't see the person's face. Despite that, their current circumstances were only slightly better than the corpses.

Lin Sanjiu contemplated for a while and finally decided not to rescue or bring them into her capsule. The capsule could only hold two people at most, even if they stood together. She had no choice but to prioritize her companions.

"Sorry, please persevere a bit longer." She murmured, it was almost as if she was comforting herself. "The organisms within the roots are converging... I am sure there is a way to get out."

Chapter 170: The World Called Garden of Eden

"So, this really is the Garden of Eden!" Lin Sanjiu uttered as every inch of her body trembled while she looked at her surroundings.

Due to the overwhelming shock, she looked around with a lifeless glaze in her eyes. She was in a daze. Unknowingly, a gigantic object approached her from behind, casting an enormous shadow over her. Sensing the peculiar presence, she turned behind and couldn't help but curse softly.

"What the hell?"

Just half an hour ago, Lin Sanjiu was still sitting in the capsule, helplessly drifting along. She was right about the tree roots converging. As the flow speed of the fluid within the roots sped up, the currents within the roots grew stronger. She saw batches after batches of black figures being transported to the 'river' she was in. Not long after, her capsule was surrounded by a variety of corpses. Waves after waves of fluid, carrying various dead corpses, hit her capsule, causing it to spin uncontrollably. For a moment, Lin Sanjiu felt dizzy. She couldn't see anything clearly. She could only feel the flow of the fluid accelerating downward.

As objects rammed violently against her capsule, due to the strong waves, some components in her capsules were loosened. As the capsule spun and whirled 360 degrees, the components fell off and were tossed within the capsule, hitting the walls noisily and almost disfiguring Lin Sanjiu a couple of times.

Considering the hectic situation, Lin Sanjiu didn't have time to protect herself. She only realized that her capsule was under attack after a minute had passed. As the capsule was designed to imprison female posthumans, it was impossible to open the capsule from inside. On the other hand, damaging it from the outside wasn't that difficult. When the alarm bells head started ringing in her

head, an indistinct silhouette of a man broke through the fluid and slammed the door of the capsule violently again. The hinge of the door started vibrating.

Shocked, Lin Sanjiu attempted to pull the door back, but there was nothing to provide support in the capsule. Just as she spat out a stream of expletives, she saw the black figure dashing toward her again. This time, he managed to grab the door handle and started shaking the door vigorously.

This time, she managed to get a better view. The person outside was a well-built man and his clothes were in tatters. There were wounds all over his pale skin. Only the mask on his face was undamaged. A pair of long thin eyes stared at Lin Sanjiu through the mask.

[This person wants to come in!]

Lin Sanjiu finally understood. Anything caught by this strange tree roots could only survive using their physical advantages, their abilities or their special items. Nonetheless, no matter what methods they used, they were still tortured badly by the corrosive slime and the thin roots. Most of the people were simply unable to survive this, and have long become the many wreaked corpses around her.

Under such circumstances, anyone would covet a small boat-like capsule which could fully protect its passenger. The man outside must have reached his limits. He could see that there was no way Lin Sanjiu could hold back the door. Thus, he kicked and trampled the door with all his might as if he had decided to take her down with him if he couldn't get in.

After several attacks, the capsule vibrated so violently that Lin Sanjiu felt that her capsule would fall apart at any moment. Her anger flared and she quickly drew her saber, planning to stab the man once the door opened. When the man suddenly noticed the saber pointing toward the door, he stopped. He looked at the saber

and then at the door.

"You bastard! If you enter, I'm going to thrust this saber into your body!" Even though she knew that the man couldn't hear her from outside, Lin Sanjiu yelled out. "Know your place and scram!"

At that moment, the fluid within the roots grew more turbulent. Even though he was holding on to the door handle, the man was staggering from blows from the objects that hit him. It was nearly impossible for him to dodge her saber considering that he couldn't even steady himself.

In the end, the man gave up after staring at Lin Sanjiu with his long bloodshot eyes for a while. He released his hands from the handle and swam away with difficulty. Lin Sanjiu gripped her saber tightly. She didn't dare to let her guard down. She let out a sigh of relief only after he vanished from her line of sight.

Before she could catch her breath, a heavy force suddenly struck the back of her capsule. She stumbled forward along with the capsule. Unprepared, her head struck the wall of the capsule. If she didn't convert her saber back into a card in time, she would have been stabbed.

Before she could stabilize herself, someone kicked her capsule forcefully from behind once more. That pair of long narrow eyes, which had somehow gotten behind Lin Sanjiu's capsule, revealed the man's astonishment to find that Lin Sanjiu was still alive. He pulled back his leg and swam toward the capsule again.

Without even waiting for her body to stabilize, a forceful kick came again from the same direction—the pair of long thin eyes, which moved to the back unknowingly, seemed to be flabbergasted as to why Lin Sanjiu hadn't died yet. As soon as his legs withheld back their strength, he began to dig and swim towards the capsule.

"If you really want to die, I'll grant it!"

Lin Sanjiu felt a surge of murderous intent. Within a single

thought, she stored her capsule, exposing her body to the slime outside. She felt waves of stinging pain from her skin. But before she could get her saber out, she saw the man swimming upward desperately. Lin Sanjiu was stunned. Suddenly, a tsunami-like wave washed over everything.

For a second, she lost all her five senses. She felt an immense pressure and only saw darkness. Pain coursed through her body and she felt surges of acid in her nostrils. Through her fragmented sensations, she felt the strong currents pushing her body for a long distance, before she finally hit a solid surface.

[Is this some creature's corpse?]

Once that thought struggled out from Lin Sanjiu's cluttered mind, she suddenly felt an emptiness behind her. The solid wall-like surface disappeared, and a length of thing root pushed her waist. She felt herself being pushed out. The rhizome's epidermis opened up.

By chance, this 'unnutritional' creature had been pushed close to its epidermis, the rhizome seemed more than happy to squeeze her out of its network of roots. The man caught in the middle of the chaotic flow was stupefied by the scene in front of him. Following which, he struggled crazily, using all his limbs to swim forward, but he couldn't even get close to the epidermis before it closed up.

Only layers of soil, a few thousand meters under the ground level, awaited her outside.

"I'm really going to die this time..."

The rhizomes continued heading downward. They probably already reached the planetary core. Lin Sanjiu closed her eyes, waiting for the layers of rock and soil to crush her to death. Suddenly, her body became light and a sense of weightlessness embraced her.

With the sound of whooshing air by her ears, her heart nearly

shot out from her chest when she opened her eyes. She was falling down rapidly. Tears spilled from her eyes, as the wind whipped her body painfully. But at that point, nothing could compare to her immense fear that she would fall to her death. She drew out her saber in a panic and stabbed it into the thing beside her. It might be the wall of a precipice for all she knew, but surprisingly, she managed to stab her saber into it, slowing her fall. Though she was still falling rapidly, judging from her current speed, at least she wouldn't die from the fall. Lin Sanjiu clutched the hilt of her saber firmly with both hands. Sparks flew as she slid down the 'wall'. The blade of her saber quickly became blunt as the black ground below her grew closer and closer. She steeled her heart and let go of her saber before landing.

Lin Sanjiu landed heavily. She felt a sweetness in her throat and rolled hastily to dispel the impact from the fall. Fortunately, she fell on soft, slight pliable ground. She checked herself and found that she only had some abrasions and bruises. She didn't even fracture a single bone.

Escaping a narrow death, Lin Sanjiu took a few deep breaths before she calmed down.

"What's this? What's going on?" Her mind was an utter mess. "Wasn't the roots heading for the planetary core? How could I have fallen from a high place?"

Without the sparks from the saber, she found herself in pitch-black darkness. She couldn't see a thing. Lin Sanjiu had been to many dark places, but never was there a place darker than her current location. Most people should have such experiences—no matter how dark a place is, there would always be a ray of light; no matter how dim it is, after one's eyes adapted to the darkness, one should be able to see silhouettes at least. Posthumans could see even better.

Yet, she found herself in pure darkness. There wasn't even a single beam of light. If it weren't for the sparks from her saber, Lin

Sanjiu would even believe that she had gone blind all of a sudden. It was as if someone had used bricks and cement to build a room without any windows or door.

[Huh?]

Lin Sanjiu felt a little startled by her thoughts, she felt a drop of cold sweat sliding down her forehead. She had put together the fragmented clues subconsciously. The tree roots were on the shallow layers of the soil. The deeper the roots go, the thicker they got. After a few thousand meters deep, everything within the roots converged...

She should be at the core of the planet, yet she fell from a height. This place without any light was like a fortified room...

Compared to Nüwa, admittedly, Lin Sanjiu's intelligence was lacking. But when things were so clearly spelled out for her, she couldn't help shuddering as she had finally solved the mystery regarding the tree roots.

Lin Sanjiu quivered as she took out her [Ability Polishing Agent]. The silver light lit up the space around her immediately. However, the light seemed to waver in the darkness due to her trembling hand. Before she had the time to survey her surroundings, she hastily raised her [Ability Polishing Agent] and looked upward.

There was nothing except a darkness which seemed capable of swallowing everything.

"Cling!" Her [Ability Polishing Agent] fell and rolled on the ground, illuminating a small area.

"This is the planetary core..." Lin Sanjiu murmured, her words sounded illogical even to herself, "but, the center of this planet is hollow."

This planet was like a sphere without a center core. When she reached the center of the planet, it was just an empty space. She naturally fell after being pushed out by the plant's fluids...

So that was why the roots were on the shallow layers of soil. This tree grew upside down. The tree roots stayed on the topmost layer, absorbing nutrients from whatever creature it could capture. Burrowing through the planet's crust, it delivered the nutrients to the tree crown which grew in the hollow core of the planet.

She concluded that she must have fallen out from that unseekable 'tree'. But when Lin Sanjiu looked around, she didn't see a single tree. There were certainly many tall plants around her, but they seemed to be some large species of herbaceous plants. She landed on top of these large plants just now. She picked up her [Ability Polishing Agent] and squinted. At the edge of the illuminated area, she could make out the vague outlines of a few round shadows. From this distance, they were probably about the size of a truck.

"What the hell is that?"

Even after looking at it for some time, the object did not move. "It probably isn't some sort creature so it shouldn't be that dangerous..." she muttered to herself before she approached the shadow carefully. As she got closer, the light from her [Ability Polishing Agent] also illuminated the object.

It was an apple which was one and half times her height.

The unique outline for an apple was drawn by the reflection of the light off its surface. Still, she couldn't really tell its color, couldn't see its entire appearance clearly, and its size was twice that of a truck...

Lin Sanjiu stared at it with her mouth wide open. For a second, she couldn't believe her eyes. After some time, she finally uttered, "So, this is really the 'Garden of Eden'."

While she was still in shock, a dark figure, even larger than the apple, sneaked toward her and into the silver light coming from her [Ability Polishing Agent].

Chapter 171: An Apple a Day Keeps Doctor Away

"What in the world..."

While she sprinted, the wobbling silver light from her [Ability Polishing Agent] was now just a luminous blur so it was difficult to see her surroundings. Yet, with that single glance, Lin Sanjiu already knew that the right thing for her to do now was to run.

In the process of speeding away, the trembling's silver light turned into a continuous shaking ball, making the surroundings unclear instead—nonetheless, even with only that single glance, Lin Sanjiu still knew that the correct thing for her to do now was to run.

When the shadow crept above her, she didn't even feel a sense of danger. As the shadow from the creature very large, it exceeded the area illuminated by her [Ability Polishing Agent]. As such, it merged with the darkness, so it was difficult to recognize that it was a living creature in that split second.

Lin Sanjiu only realized its presence when she turned around and came face-to-face with it. She was dumbfounded. How many times, in a human's entire lifespan, would one actually meet a five-stories-tall... praying mantis?

Lin Sanjiu held her [Ability Polishing Agent] a little higher, coincidentally illuminating its beady, grayish-white muddy eyes. It was evident that the eyes of this species of praying mantis had degenerated due to the many generations living in this darkness... The praying mantis seemed to sense something. As soon as the light was directed toward it, a long, curvaceous sickle-like shadow swung down from the air.

Even an idiot would know what was—judging from the praying mantis's size, if she was caught between its forelegs, she would

instantly be turned into a mashed pulp. Lin Sanjiu didn't even dare to take a second glance. She turned and ran.

She couldn't tell if any other dangers lurked in the dark surroundings. She had no choice but to hold her breath and run toward the giant apple. At least, the apple didn't show any abnormalities when she observed it for some time. In any case, it was definitely safer than anywhere else!

A sudden rumbling noise came from behind her, as if a building grew legs and was now chasing her. Even though it had devolved eyes, its sickle-like forelegs got more and more accurate with each attack. Those legs which were longer than Lin Sanjiu's full height brushed past her body multiple times. She was knocked down by the wind generated by its attack. She scrambled and rolled away before standing up and running again.

Lin Sanjiu didn't even think about fighting.

Firstly, she was already at a disadvantage because of the darkness. More importantly, it was no easy task for her to destroy something of that size, even if it stood still!

The apple was farther than she expected, as she had already been running for more than ten minutes, at her current speed. She barely dodged a few more attacks accompanied with the sound whistling wind behind her. Under the ripple-like illumination from her [Ability Polishing Agent], she finally found herself getting closer to the apple.

She instantly felt that she had expressed her shock too early. If she hadn't looked at the apple from afar, she probably couldn't tell what it was. Looking up from under the apple, she could only see a humongous, hazy, dark shadow with a slight curvature.

[How big is this place?]

Despite her shock, Lin Sanjiu continued running. With her maximum speed, she lunge herself under the apple in the blink of

an eye.

[Huh?]

She stopped and realized that something was a little off.

The rumbling noise, along with the occasional howling gusts of wind, had vanished. She turned around and noticed the large silhouette of the praying mantis standing some distance away. The mantis turned its head left and right and, surprisingly, stopped chasing.

As it was difficult for Lin Sanjiu to raise her [Ability Polishing Agent] while she ran, she held it in her hand tightly. At that moment, the silver light pouring through the gaps between her fingers were quickly swallowed by the darkness so she didn't have a clear view of the things around her.

Not far from her, the praying mantis moved a little, as if it was hesitant about something. Following which, it slowly retreated. After a short while, it disappeared and melted into the boundless darkness.

Lin Sanjiu suddenly felt goosebumps all over. She was a little afraid to turn around.

[There is only an apple behind me, right? What sort of danger did the mantis sense?]

Every single strand of hair at the back of her neck stood pencil straight, as if they were antennas, trying to sense even a single minute movement around her. She strained her eyes to listen, but there was only silence.

Afraid that she might draw attention, she turned her body little by little. Facing the hazy darkness behind her, she slowly raised her hand, without making a sound. She released her grip and silver light poured freely from her [Ability Polishing Agent], instantly illuminating the area in front of her.

At first glance, she just felt that the skin of the apple was weird.

It was neither green nor red. She could tell that its skin was very thick just from its appearance and it was a strangely disgusting, flesh-like pink. It must have fallen from the tree quite some time ago as Lin Sanjiu could see a black, rotten portion of its skin, like a large patch of mold, just by her foot.

[Although the apple is very weird, it does not seem dangerous... Huh?]

Before she could finish her thought, the apple suddenly rocked a while. Assuming that it was suddenly going to react, Lin Sanjiu was just about to jump aside when she realized that the apple wasn't heading toward her. It was leaving the ground, as if levitating off the ground.

"This..." Lin Sanjiu could only utter a single word as she steadied herself.

[How can an apple suddenly fly?]

Just as she was at a loss, an eye-piercing brightness came out of nowhere. It lit up the entire place, like a blinding snowfield during the day. The light from her [Ability Polishing Agent] simply could not compare to that. Lin Sanjiu couldn't help closing her eyes due to the suddenly brightness. After a few seconds, she finally forced herself to open her eyes. With her half-opened eyes, she surveyed her surroundings.

There was a face staring down at her from mid-air. Lin Sanjiu felt a chill down her spine. The apple which had suddenly flown off the ground, didn't 'fly', instead, it had been picked up by a 'person' and was now in the 'person's' hand.

It was now clear why the praying mantis decided to retreat abruptly. It wasn't because there was anything wrong with the apple, but the mantis probably sensed the presence of the gigantic 'human' by whatever means, so it abandoned its prey and dashed off in a haste.

Even though Lin Sanjiu referred to that person as a ‘human’, that was because she momentarily couldn’t find the right words to describe it. She was looking at a very flat face. When a crack appeared on its tough-looking skin, at the bottom part of its face, she finally realized that was its mouth. Its mouth was very wide, and could open all the way to the side of its ears—if those were its ears.

Whether it was the patterns on its skin, or those pair of emotionless eyes that cold-blooded animals exclusively possessed, they all reminded Lin Sanjiu of a snake. Yet, under its snake-like face, she saw its hands with its five digits, holding the apple. Lin Sanjiu couldn’t make out which of its body part was at the area paralleled to her sight. As it was massive, Lin Sanjiu couldn’t see its front and its back. She could only see its dark brown patterned skin, which emerged from its thick keratin skin. There were round spots all over its body, which were the size of her head.

Apparently, it was in a bending position. With a sweeping glance, Lin Sanjiu found herself tongue-tied. Behind the person with snake-face, she spotted many more ‘people’ with similar faces, faraway, high above. She couldn’t really see their bodies, as they were too far away. She could only make out the vague outlines of their silhouette through the foggy atmosphere.

Her feet became icy cold and she froze on the spot. She didn’t know what these weird people were planning to do to her. Considering the disparity between their sizes, Lin Sanjiu figured that any resistance would be futile.

Unexpectedly, the snake-faced person straightened its back and turned away. Lin Sanjiu was a little stunned. The large patch of skin in front of her started to move, as the rows of its patterned skin moved upwards, she felt a slight vibration from the ground. The ‘person’ seemed to be leaving.

Without time to consider the reasons behind its actions, Lin Sanjiu scurried off like the praying mantis. She ran until she

reached a safe distance and plunged herself between a few plants. It was only then that she felt her heart beating normally again.

With light around her, she could see clearly that those plants that were taller than her by half a head were nothing more than typical grass. Rather than being surprised, Lin Sanjiu found that it was within her expectations. Lin Sanjiu smiled drily. After some contemplation, she more or less understood her situation. From the snake-faced person's perspective, Lin Sanjiu was merely the size of an ant. Even though the person was looking in her direction, how was it going to find an ant hiding in a patch of grass if it didn't bend down to search carefully?

She felt that this series of unexpected 'discoveries' had successfully blended her brain into a mushy paste. She steadied her breathing and peeked out from the grass. She needed to stretch her neck to its limit before she could look past the tips of the grass around her and into the distance. As she expected, she didn't see a sky. There was only a layer of rugged rock stratum high above her head. The light from the bright ball in one of snake-faced person's hand revealed the interplay of light between the jagged edges of the rocks.

Looking down a few thousands meters from the layer of rocks, she spotted a few large apple trees. Though from her angle, she could only see a portion of the trees. She saw the previous snake-face person holding up the apple in its hand and pointing to the trees, as if it was saying something to its companions. Only then did she make an informed guess that the apple fell from those tree.

[Not only did the apple fall from the tree closest to me, I fell out from it too...] This thought surfaced in her mind unwittingly when she spotted the long cut scar on the cliff-like tree trunk.

Under the blinding light, as if in a snowfield, she could no longer see the praying mantis. She looked around her and didn't see anything else interesting. Lin Sanjiu took a glance at the snake-faced people who seemed to be discussing. She suddenly ran out

from the patch of grass and raced toward the apple tree.

When she was in Hyperthermal Hell, she had scaled a thousand-meter precipice, and climbing up this cliff-like tree trunk wasn't very different, so it wasn't something hard for her. Other than being vigilant, just in case some giant creature attacked her again unexpectedly, Lin Sanjiu managed to climb up to one of the branches without a hitch.

The tip of that tree branch hung two to three identical fleshy-pink apples just then; without the unfresh black color on them, contrary to her expectations, they looked even more disgusting.

[So the tree roots sucked so many creatures from the surface of the planet, just to bear these strange fruits?] Lin Sanjiu stared at a few of those flesh-colored apples, feeling dubious. Considering the time that B.Rabbit and the others were sucked into the rhizomes, they were probably somewhere in the trunk, but how should she look for them?

Just when she was in a daze, a long hand with five digits reached up above her and plucked an apple. This caused the tree branch to shake violently. She could have fallen off the tree because of that, but she was just too small, so the branch was like the Golden Gate Bridge to her.

The flat snake-face person peeked out from the other side of the tree. It had unknowingly approached her, much to her surprise. She was so shocked that she quickly crouched down. It was only when she noticed that it wasn't looking in her direction that she gathered her courage to look. Even though the person had a pair of arms, it had the body of a snake. The only difference was that its upper body was exceptionally muscular, so it reminded her of a human's pectoral and abdominal muscles.

The snake-faced person did not noticed that a tiny thing was observing it. All its attention was on the apple in its hand, and it seemed pleased. Next, it opened its huge mouth. Its face was

immediately split into two. Just like that, an entire apple disappeared down its throat.

When it closed its mouth, Lin Sanjiu heard a suddenly muffled piercing wail which sounded as if it came from behind the snake-face person's skin.

Chapter 172: The Joy of a Fruit Farmer

The soft wretched wail came from the snake-faced person's throat. As it was behind a layer of snake skin, Lin Sanjiu almost thought she misheard it. Looking up, she saw a round protrusion at the snake-faced person's throat. It was the apple. Soon, the round protrusion slid down and the wails became softer and softer until it disappeared into the person's stomach.

Cold sweat covered Lin Sanjiu's head in an instant.

The wails seemed to attract the attention of a few other snake-faced people who were nearby. They looked in their direction and quickly started to move. Their eyes narrowed and they shouted angrily as they slithered swiftly to the tree that Lin Sanjiu was on.

Compared to the others, the snake-faced person who had just eaten the apple seemed smaller than the rest. It looked a bit uneasy after being surrounded by the larger snake-faced people. It nodded its head profusely, even raising the end of its tail, nodding it in mid-air, as if apologizing.

[So, these apples can't be eaten casually?] Lin Sanjiu couldn't help thinking. Just when she wanted to crawl closer to have a look, a snake-faced person turned to look at the branch without warning. There were no emotions behind the yellow eyeball which was almost the size of a room. The eyeball, with a vertical pupil, was directly in front of Lin Sanjiu.

Shocked, Lin Sanjiu immediately laid flat on the branch and hid behind a protruding piece of bark, hoping that the person didn't spot her.

The person's vertical pupil was even longer than her full height. Peeking out from the cracks of the tree bark, she saw the cold, translucent yellow eye pausing for a moment before turning away. It probably didn't notice the ant-sized Lin Sanjiu. Meanwhile, the snake-faced people were still speaking loudly, with raised voices.

Though their voices nearly made her deaf, she couldn't help rejoicing silently.

After some time, the noise gradually died down. Although she couldn't understand their language, she could still get a general gist of their conversation from their actions. The smaller snake-faced person who ate the apple on the sly was banished far away to one side. It could only rub its hands repeatedly, as it looked on, with a pair of gloomy eyes, while the other snake-faced people plucked apples busily.

They obviously had some standards for their apples. Some were plucked, while others were left on the tree for unknown reasons. Perhaps, those weren't ripe or big enough. Anyway, to Lin Sanjiu, they were all unbelievably huge.

After plucking the apples from the trees, the snake-faced people were not in a hurry to eat them. Instead, the apples were only collected in a small pile on the ground and left for another snake-faced person to point at them one by one, probably counting the numbers.

Noticing that the snake-faced person in charge of harvesting slithering to another tree, Lin Sanjiu used all her limbs and ran toward the tip of the tree branch. Two apples on the very tree branch she was on were left untouched.

Since no leaves grew on the tree, Lin Sanjiu had no cover. She had no choice but to lay flat as she approached the apple. She crawled forward. As she got closer to the apple, she felt an apprehension when she saw the unique flesh-like appearance of the apple's skin.

Swaying in the breeze, occasionally a ripple appeared on the surface of the flesh-like skin of the apple. A few pores would appear and then suddenly vanish.

Lin Sanjiu gulped as she reached out to touch the apple.

"Ha ah!"

A coarse gasp-like sound rang out from nowhere abruptly, almost causing her to fall over. Following that, she heard a rough, hoarse, weak voice. It was as if that person had struggled to squeeze out from some place, "Haaa, ah! Help... help..."

Lin Sanjiu stared blankly at the apple in front of her, as it made all her hair stand on end. A few greenish vein-like streaks appeared on the spot she touched. As those vein-like streaks protruded from the apple's skin, the person's voice became louder and hoarser. It was impossible for her to tell the gender of its owner. "Ahh, help..."

No matter how hard the person tried, it seemed as if he or she could only utter the word 'help'.

The constant faint vibration from the ground caused by the movements of the snake-faced people suddenly stopped. Lin Sanjiu's instantly regained her rationality and quickly shot a glance at the area nearby. She noticed that the nearest mountain-like silhouette had stopped. She immediately rushed over to the apple and whispered, "If you want to be saved, shut up now!"

The sound of heavy panting from the apple continued for a while, the person in the apple was obviously unwilling to just shut up. However, the person finally used up all his or her energy and ceased making any more noise.

When Lin Sanjiu felt the vibrations from the ground again, she let out a faint sigh of relief.

"Is there a person trapped inside?" Lin Sanjiu murmured to herself, she spoke so softly that even she couldn't hear herself. "But this apple looks rather solid..."

[Should I cut the apple open to take a look?] She thought to herself hesitantly.

Just when Lin Sanjiu was a little undecided, she suddenly felt a bright light shining upon on. She had been very cautious. Even

without the shelter of leaves, Lin Sanjiu had been standing in the shadow of the other apple. However, at that moment, the large shadow cast by that apple rose up abruptly, and light enveloped her in a split second.

Someone took away that apple.

She turned her head to look without thinking and found herself staring face-to-face at a tall, vertical eye pupil.

[This time, the snake-faced person absolutely saw me, right?]

Lin Sanjiu stifled her unbearable urge to scream, before slowly taking a step backward. She didn't dare to take her gaze off that vertical pupil for even one second.

Although she took a few steps back, that vertical pupil didn't follow her movements—it was still directed at the two apples, it was trying to find the source of the noise.

She heaved an involuntary sigh and quickly tried to retreat to the other end of the tree branch

Lin Sanjiu swore that if she managed to escape, she would wait for the snake-faced people to leave before coming out.

However, things didn't go as planned.

The apple, with a few veins still remaining, reacted once again. The flesh-like skin of the apple vibrated for while. After a few muscular shapes appeared on the surface of the skin, the voice started shouting again. This time the person said more words, "Ahhh... Save me! Li-liar! It hurts!"

Lin Sanjiu felt her heart skip a beat. "Damn it!" she cursed.

[The person in the apple obviously couldn't see what was happening!]

That snake-faced person stood right beside the apple, this time it heard the shouts from the apple. It reached for the apple with its five-digit hand. Snap. It plucked the apple which had been

screaming non-stop.

The meaty apple let out a terrifying howl, seemingly aware that it would fall prey to a creature a layer higher in the food chain. The fleshy skin of the apple vibrated so rapidly that it would make an onlooker giddy, "No... hah... don't kill me. There was another person here just now, she—"

The person in the apple was finally able to articulate his or her words fluently. Yet, before the end of the person's sentence, Lin Sanjiu heard a snap. The snake-faced person broke the apple into two with its bare hands and the noise stopped.

Lin Sanjiu felt her nerves snap at the same time. She covered her mouth and didn't dare to move as a wave of long-lost fear welled up in her heart.

From her position, she actually couldn't see what was inside the apple. The 'fruit juice' from the apple flowed along the snake-faced person's hands, pattering down to the ground. That quickly drew her attention. She noticed the unique deep red color of human blood, mixed with bits of flesh falling out from the same apple.

Apparently, the social status of this particular snake-faced person far surpassed the smaller snake-faced person. Even though it casually ripped open an apple, the surrounding snake-faced people only raised their head to take a look, without making any comments.

It licked the half apple on its hands; its thin long forked tongue was like a peeler. It instantly peeled off a layer of that apple.

It took a bite of that apple. The snake-faced person tilted its head as it stared at the apple in its hands and said something. The snake-person who had been carrying the bright ball of light quickly came over. It hissed a few words before leading the person who was eating the apple away.

Lin Sanjiu let out a heavy sigh only after noting that they were

far away.

After that incident, she didn't dare to dash out rashly. Fortunately, the tree bark wasn't smooth, so it wasn't hard for her to find a small depression to hide in.

"Let's just keep waiting until they leave..." Lin Sanjiu thought to herself in silence.

The apple harvesting didn't continue for long. Evidently, many apples were not right for harvesting. The snake-faced people left those on their branches and walked away with the other apples they had collected.

When all the snake-faced people had left, the lights vanished. Almost as if remembering this plot of lost land, the darkness attacked with a vengeance, enveloping the entire place with its presence, until it was pitch-dark once again.

Lin Sanjiu hid in a groove on the tree bark. She waited for a long time and only crawled out cautiously when she could confirm that there wasn't a single sound around her.

Her [Ability Polishing Agent] could only illuminate a radius of four to five meters. Being on such a gigantic tree, such a dim light was just a little bit better than having no light at all. While Lin Sanjiu explored a few empty tree branches, she started growing worried. At least, she knew she had to make sense of flesh-like apple before she could plan her next step.

Hastening her steps, she walked along yet another two small branches. Finally, she spotted the silhouette of an apple at the corner of her light.

"I finally found one..." Lin Sanjiu rushed forward, muttering to herself, "This apple better keep quiet!"

As soon as she said that, a hissing sound came out of nowhere without any warning. It was like a clap of thunder in the silent darkness.

"Indeed... that apple... didn't lie..."

Every word was accompanied with a strange hissing as if that creature wasn't skilled in such manner of conversation. Lin Sanjiu couldn't stop her hands from trembling. She raised the trembling silver light and saw the face of the 'person' that was speaking.

The little snake-faced person's wide mouth cracked open, almost as if to express its delight.

"There... really is... a person here."

Chapter 173: The Secret Behind the Flesh Apple

Lin Sanjiu did not know if the snake-faced person could hear her. But, right now, Lin Sanjiu's ears were filled with her own heavy breathing. She felt her blood freeze in her veins.

"Whir... Where, are you, from?" The cracks on the snake-faced person deepened, forming a cavernous, dark, canyon-like smile.

She found the language it spoke novel and odd. It rolled its forked tongue, surprisingly revealing an interest in continuing on: "You, talk."

Lin Sanjiu never imagined that this snake-faced person could speak human language.

Although she knew that this situation was beyond her control, her regret swallowed her heart whole as if a poisonous snake. [I shouldn't have touched that meaty apple! I'm too rash!]

[What should I do now?]

Seeing that she wasn't responding, the snake-face person grew impatient. It uncoiled its tail, and its body rose. It watched Lin Sanjiu closely with its pair of vertical pupils.

"Where... are you, from?"

Lin Sanjiu's heart froze. Her body reacted faster than her thoughts. She stored her [Ability Polishing Agent] in a split second. She turned and ran under the cover of the sudden darkness.

However, as soon as she began moving, something like a meteorite crashed in front of her. The tree branch, which had been stable all this time, started shaking violently and she fell backward.

Lin Sanjiu quickly took out her [Ability Polishing Agent]. She saw the shadow of a large bridge-like structure above her head. It had a

forked tip. The thing sticking out from the tree bark in front of her was indeed the snake-faced person's tongue.

If she ran any faster, she would have been pierced.

Suddenly, a large drop of saliva fell on top of Lin Sanjiu, she was immediately drenched. The skin all over her body hurt from the impact of that single drop of saliva. If the snake-faced person wanted to attack her...

Lin Sanjiu couldn't think of anything that she could do.

"I-I came from the tree..." Since she was unable to defeat or run away from it, she could only wipe her face and talk. Maybe she could find a better opportunity through their conversation: "Why are you able to speak our language?"

It was obvious that not all snake-faced people knew human language. Otherwise, how could Lin Sanjiu be able to alive now? She probably would've been found when the meaty apple spoke.

This snake-face person seemed to be the only one who understood human language, that was why it secretly turned back after everyone was gone.

Hearing her reply, the huge bridge-like shadow above her head returned back with a swish. Though the object was huge, it moved at a speed faster than one could react. As the snake-faced person was too close to her, Lin Sanjiu couldn't see its entire expression, she could only hear the snake-faced person's hisses: "Tree? Weird... not possible."

However, it didn't answer her question.

She was too near to that thunderous voice, so her ears hurt. She rubbed her ears and continued, "I'm not lying, I really did come from the tree."

Two tall straight pupils whirled around, looking more intimidating under the silver light from her [Ability Polishing Agent].

"Impossible... All nutrients, should, be totally absorbed." The snake-faced person remained motionless as it stared at Lin Sanjiu, prepared to prevent her from a second attempt to escape. "Why, aren't you.... in the apple? Where are you... from?"

[Nutrients? In the apple?]

Although Lin Sanjiu had a faint premonition long ago, she felt a cold chill.

"Do the nutrients... refer to us humans?" She stuttered, feeling that the answer to her question was stupidly obvious.

Unexpectedly, the snake-face person corrected her.

After it spat out the word 'no' from the tip of its tongue, it only continued after a slight pause, as if it needed to choose its words, "Trees bear fruit. There are nutrients in fruits. The nutrients in the fruit I ate were bad, poor... But, I understand your language."

[Did I interpret those words correctly?]

Lin Sanjiu was almost stunned.

"Some fruits are good, like—" Conversing for the first time with other creatures that weren't snake-faced people, the snake-faced person seemed to have some interest in continuing the conversation. When it spoke to this point, it used its tongue to pronounce a complex syllable, appearing to be someone's name: "... ate one, she can glow. Some are no good, the one I ate, made me understand words."

"Every fruit has different nutrients, the one the leader ate, is the best."

Even though what the snake-faced person said wasn't quite clear, Lin Sanjiu immediately understood everything.

Those apple trees, in a certain kind of sense, were a type of 'reprocessing machine'. The blood and flesh of posthumans were mixed by the tree and converted into the apples growing from the

tree. Each apple probably packed a few posthumans' abilities. When the snake-faced people ate those apples, they would obtain the corresponding abilities.

Naturally, from the snake-faced people's perspective, nutrients did not refer to humans but rather the abilities they possessed.

In that case, it was easy for Lin Sanjiu to understand why the apple could talk. The apple trees had to keep the posthumans alive so that the apples could retain their abilities. However, whether they survived in their usual human form or as a large apple structure made of a mix of blood and flesh, it wasn't for those humans to decide.

Coincidentally, the apple that the little snake-faced person secretly consumed possessed a sort of language communication ability.

When she thought about B.Rabbit and her other missing companions, Lin Sanjiu felt anxious again. She wished she could search every tree branch this very moment, but she couldn't even move now.

"You... said that you came from the tree." The snake-face person talked again, Lin Sanjiu's body shook due to the vibration of its voice, "Could it be, the nutrients in the fruits actually came from things similar to you?"

"That's right!" Lin Sanjiu was slight astonished that it never thought about the source of the nutrients. Following which, hoping for a bit of luck, she added, "I just want to find a few of my friends. Once I find them, we will leave immediately. We definitely won't disturb you guys from eating your apples... okay?"

When she was drifting along in the rhizomes, she actually wanted to rescue a few more people. But now, she had already given up that impractical fantasy.

Lin Sanjiu would be satisfied if she could just save B.Rabbit and

the rest of her companions. Unfortunately, the snake-faced person crooked its head and stared at her, but didn't say a word.

The atmosphere, as quiet as dead, hung heavily in the darkness.

Lin Sanjiu grew more and more nervous. She stealthily hid her hands behind her back.

After a long time, the snake-faced person finally spoke.

"Being able to escape... trees, very strong." It spoke in the same slow manner but its body started swaying, "If I eat you, I will become powerful. Become leader!"

"You motherf*cker!" Lin Sanjiu couldn't help spitting out B.Rabbit favorite vulgar word. At the same time the pupil in front of her rose up and a long shadow shot out from the snake-faced person's mouth, coming directing at her.

Lin Sanjiu finally had a slight taste of what it was like colliding with Golden Gate Bridge.

With a sudden loud boom, the tongue pierced deep into the tree bark. Debris flew everywhere and the 'ground' under Lin Sanjiu quaked. Fortunately, Lin Sanjiu was already prepared. Using all of her limbs simultaneously, she rolled quite a distance away, dodging the attack unglamorously.

"You think I can't do anything, just because you are larger?" She spat fiercely. She saw its tongue aiming for another attack, but she couldn't think of any ideas. She had no choice but to jump to another slightly lower tree branch.

Just as her legs left the first branch, the spot where she was before was instantly smashed to smithereens. The sap from the tree, so familiar to her, sprayed everywhere before it rained down on her body.

[Dodging like this isn't the best strategy. If I had my [Bubbles Blowing Girl] with me...]

With that thought, Lin Sanjiu stopped and quickly checked her card inventory.

When they were scavenging for items in Garden of Eden Laboratories, she practically took everything she saw, only turning all of them into cards after that. Hence, she even forgot some of these items. As she swept her eyes across the cards in her hands, she had a sudden idea.

The attacks behind her had stopped. The ground continued shaking as the snake-faced person circled the tree and continued looking for her.

Only the ground was emitting endless quakes, seeming to be from the snake-faced person movement around the tree then, as it was searching up and down for her whereabouts.

Lin Sanjiu hid behind the fork of a branch. She was in the snake-faced person's blind spot. On top of that, she had stored her [Ability Polishing Agent] to avoid being the obvious target in the darkness. The pitch-black darkness affected the snake-faced person, making it more difficult for it to find Lin Sanjiu.

"Where is it? How annoying, I want to crush you..."

The long tongue hissed as it swept to and fro above the tree bark. Just when it was feeling impatient, it saw a silver light on one of the branches, but it quickly vanished. That split second was sufficient for the snake-faced person. It shot its long tongue toward the light.

However, the series of events that unfolded was beyond the snake-faced person's expectation. Its tongue pierced through a mist. It felt a sharp burning pain it had never experienced, the pain spread rapidly through its tongue. The snake-faced person let out a fearsome hiss and pulled its tongue back into its mouth involuntarily. Right after that, it could no longer make any sound...

It collapsed to the ground, clutching its own neck tightly. It struggled soundlessly while it writhed and rolled on the ground. The ground shook, and a few apples fell. After some time, the vibrations similar to small earthquakes gradually stopped.

The black outline of the snake-faced person, which now laid on the ground, was like a mountain range. It stopped moving.

A small silver light lit up from a fork of a branch. The light could only cover a small area before dissipating into the darkness. Lin Sanjiu looked nervously at the shadow of the creature which laid out like a short mountain range. After she waited for a long time, she finally let out a sigh of relief.

Lin Sanjiu looked down at the storage device for her [Microorganism Cloud] and revealed a bitter smile.

As expected, the simple trap she set was useful. The snake-faced person stuck its tongue into the purple mist of [Microorganism Cloud]. The mist quickly adhered to its tongue and was quickly absorbed by its body. From the looks of it, she probably couldn't use the storage device to recover the mist.

Once the snake-faced person stopped shrieking and struggling, the silence returned. Lin Sanjiu could hear her racing heart. [I don't have much time.] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself. She had to find B.Rabbit and the other before resting, and quickly escape before the other snake-faced people discovered this corpse.

Chapter 174: The Head of the Demolition Crew Had Been Possessed

"F*ck. Did you work in a demolition crew in the past?"

When Lin Sanjiu heard that familiar voice again, her wound-up nerves quickly relaxed. She could no longer drive herself with willpower, and the weariness she accumulated over these few days consumed her...

"I don't care anymore," Lin Sanjiu mumbled and dropped to the ground, closing her eyes. "Deal with the rest yourselves."

—

Six hours earlier, there was an oppressive atmosphere in the air. There wasn't a single hint of breeze.

Lin Sanjiu didn't think much about the exact size of this place. But considering the size of those snake-faced people, and the fact that she couldn't even sense their presence after they left. She could only imagine how vast the place was.

While her thoughts ran wild, she leaped up and grabbed the branch above her before climbing up.

Lin Sanjiu refused to even consider the worst-case scenario.

Although she didn't know where B.Rabbit and the other were, or if they were alive, she followed her single motivation which had never changed: if they were alive, she wanted to see them; if they were dead, she needed to see their corpses.

"If I give up just like that, what is the point of me struggling till today?" She grumbled to herself softly. She held her [Vibroblade] and struck it down on the portion of the branch beside her.

Although the knife looked too small compared to the size of the branch, the laboratory's technology truly deserved its reputation. When she used it for the first time, she was prepared to saw the

branch a few times. Surprising, once the blade landed on the branch, it was as if she was cutting through air. It easily cut through the branch, and each time it left an edge with a polished surface.

As she already had some experience with this, she immediately took two step back. Boom! The smooth, polished 'sealed' surface left by the cut from her Vibroblade burst open due to the pressure from the fluid in the branch. The tree sap sprayed out like a fountain.

The length of the knife wasn't long enough to sever the branch with a single clean cut. The branch broke in half at the point of the incision with a crack. The apple hanging from the branch lost its support and fell to the ground.

Lin Sanjiu ignored the apple which fell with a screaming voice. After the sap from the branch stopped spurting out, she climbed to the edge of the incision and flashed her light to check what was inside.

This method was inspired by the dead snake-faced person.

When she was dodging the attacks from the creature, its tongue pierced through the bark of the tree. Those areas exposed a thick layer of unknown plant material. Under that layer of cuticle, Lin Sanjiu discovered a dead body hanging from the edge of the damaged tree bark. It came out together with the tree sap.

That corpse was a little different from the other dead bodies she had seen. Even though his skin was undamaged, appearing to have died not too long ago, his body was in a deformed mess, as if it had been squeezed by something. Judging from how the tree sap spurt, the pressure of the fluid probably increases as they reach the tips of the tree and this was the reason why the corpse couldn't even retain its original form.

[Maybe, the flesh of the apples were made from the flesh of several dead bodies?] There was no way to verify this conjecture

and Lin Sanjiu didn't want to think about it either. She looked inside the broken branch and couldn't help letting out a sigh of relief when she didn't see anyone inside.

If B.Rabbit and the others weren't in the branches, there was still some hope of saving them

She raised her head and looked up. The tree she was on didn't have a large canopy, it only had another 30 or 40 branches. But... Lin Sanjiu smiled bitterly, pretending that she hadn't seen the shadows of the other few colossal trees while continuing to climb to another branch.

"Anyway, I only know such a stupid method," she sounded bitter, perhaps because she suddenly thought of Nüwa. "If I can't chop down the trunk, I'll just chop off every path leading to its 'destination' then!"

[If Nüwa was around, she definitely would be able to think of a better idea.] Despite how much she rejected this thought, she just couldn't help thinking when she had to saw off the branches one by one.

[If I was Nüwa, what would I do?]

Lin Sanjiu did not dare to stop. She jumped, chopped and dodged the explosion of fluid... This had already become a seasoned process for her, and her mind started wandering. "If I was Nüwa, I would try to locate B.Rabbit and the others first.

[If I was Nüwa...]

Lin Sanjiu rushed towards the crack in the branch to investigate. If she had a mirror in front of her, she would have noticed her gradually changing expression. Her expression was icy cold, yet there was a forgiving smile on her face. Whenever someone saw that expression, it would give the impression that she was looking at an insensible child, while also looking like a patient who was on

deathbed.

That was an expression that Nüwa wore.

"I'm nearly stifled to death!"

When Lin Sanjiu slipped into a strange state unknowingly, she suddenly heard a voice she hadn't heard in long while. Initially, she thought she had saved someone from a branch. However, when she looked around, she realized that she was all alone.

"Where are you looking?"

Lin Sanjiu was stunned for a moment. She finally realized that the voice was coming from her own mind.

"Mrs. Manas?"

The Nüwa-like expression quickly slipped off her face, as if shattered ice. She couldn't react for a second, as her eyes widened from her bewilderment. "My [School of Higher Consciousness] is still around?"

"Lin Sanjiu, you haven't even started your compulsory nine years of education, why would Teacher leave?"

Lin Sanjiu held her knife absent-mindedly, while she stayed in the same spot without moving. In the past, she had to compose herself and slowly dive into her own consciousness—though she was not someone that could really meditate in reality. However, this time, she didn't know how she had somehow entered this state successfully.

The kindergarten didn't change much.

Mrs. Manas was still represented by two speakers. The teddy bear, Barbie, and Transformer figurine were still sitting on their stools. The foam flooring still felt very realistic. The only difference between now and her previous visit was that she was no longer holding an educational picture chart and the red flower brooch had disappeared.

She never thought that she would actually miss this place a little.

"It has been so long since I met you, I thought my [School of Higher Consciousness] had been sealed completely..." Lin Sanjiu sighed softly. "When did you return? What is the state of my [School of Higher Consciousness] now?"

Before Mrs. Manas could answer her, Lin Sanjiu stopped her promptly, "Forget it. This isn't the right time to discuss this. You should know my current situation, right? I need to look for some people as quick as possible..."

After saying that, she planned to force herself out of her mindscape.

Just as that thought surfaced, a voice blared from the speaker, "Lin Sanjiu!" The tone of that voice was rather flustered. "Wait! I know a way to help you!"

"Huh?" Lin Sanjiu hesitated, "Aren't you just a manifestation of this ability? How can you help me?"

Mrs. Manas decided to teach Lin Sanjiu a lesson on respecting teachers some other time; there were more pressing things right now.

The speed of the words coming from the two speakers hastened, "Actually, the kindergarten had been restored some time ago. The reason why I didn't let you attend a class was because I was dealing with a problematic student... Anyway, something you did just now triggered your elementary school entrance ceremony."

Lin Sanjiu listened on in a daze.

She had too many questions in mind about this weird ability of hers. But, this wasn't the right time for a discussion so she waited for Mrs. Manas to cover some main points.

"In short, you've learned 'Consciousness Mimicry' during your first grade. When you activate this ability, you can temporarily adopt the person's mode of thinking, and use the target's thought

process to analyze a situation..."

Lin Sanjiu was dumbfounded and instantly recalling her attempt to think using Nüwa's point of view.

That must have triggered her elementary school opening ceremony!

Seems like this is the one that triggered the starting of primary one level!

"Of course, you can only successfully mimic the target's mode of thinking on the basis that you have had some level of contact with the target beforehand. This ability would disregard the difference in intellect, knowledge, and experience between the user and target to some extent..."

Lin Sanjiu was already itching to get out and try her new ability. After clarifying the detail about how she could employ this ability, she ignored the ramblings of the teacher. She gave a quick farewell and left her [School of Higher Consciousness].

She returned to reality. She was still surrounded by that familiar darkness, and it was so quiet that she questioned herself if what had happened was just an illusion.

Lin Sanjiu steadied her breath and closed her eyes as she formed the image of Nüwa in her mind.

The 'Li Tao' appearance that Nüwa took was already blurry in her memory. However, Nüwa's unique expression and her detached yet sympathetic attitude towards things was still fresh in Lin Sanjiu's mind. No matter what face Nüwa used, Lin Sanjiu felt that she would be able to recognize that woman.

As Nüwa's appearance and voice grew clearer in her mind, Lin Sanjiu's expression gradually changed.

After some time, she slowly opened her mind again. She had successfully activated her [Consciousness Mimicry].

When Lin Sanjiu remembered this moment in retrospect, she couldn't help shuddering at the thought of Nüwa's deep insights.

The total surface area of the planet was 90 million kilometer squares. Subtracting the 45 million kilometer squares of ocean, the remaining land area was divided into square grids in Nüwa's mind. The image of the region of dry land transformed into a 3D lattice model. With a single thought from Lin Sanjiu, it began spinning rapidly. It finally stopped on a precise set of coordinates.

Using this set of coordinates as the spot where B.Rabbit and the rest were absorbed into the ground and analyzing the rhizomes' path from it thickness, an image of the planet's landform appeared in her mind. Modelled the flow speed of the tree sap, including variables such as gravitational force and using other planets as a form of comparison, Lin Sanjiu determined the location of this planetary core and simulated the few most possible pathways in her mind...

Lin Sanjiu herself couldn't keep up with this series of calculations. A gazillion numerals, graphs and netlist flashed past her mind. It was as if someone was controlling a computer remotely, and she couldn't comprehend the series of operations.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know how much time had passed when she snapped out from Nüwa's thought process. Lin Sanjiu returned to her normal thinking mode and took a large gulp of air. It was only then that she realized that she was drenched in sweat. She was exhausted, it was more tiring than those three days of non-stop digging.

"Here!"

Lin Sanjiu already knew the location of B.Rabbit and the others.

She searched through the area of the tree 20 meters below the position she deduced from Nüwa's thought process. Standing amidst a messy pile of tree barks and sap, Lin Sanjiu bore with her dizziness and counted silently.

After counted down for three minutes, she suddenly stuck her arms into a hole in the tree. As expected, she touched a soaked ball of fur that was pushed to this corner by the tree sap.

There was a chain of people behind the ball of fur. Lin Sanjiu gathered her strength and pulled hard. With that, she dragged that chain of people out from the hole in the tree.

Using the light from her [Ability Polishing Agent], she saw B.Rabbit, who was unconscious, lying motionlessly by her feet. The corrosive sap had mangled its fur so badly that it was as if B.Rabbit had been gnawed by a dog. From the looks of it, he must have shared his goth outfit with the rest of the gang. Xueqin, Error 517 and the twin sisters were tied tightly to a long goth-style belt.

Next, Lin Sanjiu walked over to the next set of deduced coordinates and rescued Snow without any worries. However, Lin Sanjiu was bothered by the fact that she was unable to find Hui Chuyan no matter how hard she searched.

[Let's wake the others and ask them, then...] she thought uneasily.

For now, judging from her exhaustion, it was impossible for her to activate her [Consciousness Mimicry] again within this amount of time.

After Lin Sanjiu laid all the people she rescued in a straight row, B.Rabbit was the first to stir.

He twitched his hind legs a few times involuntarily before he finally opened his eyes.

Other than Lin Sanjiu's large head, he saw the messy pile of bumpy, uneven, tattered tree barks all around him...

"F*ck. Did you work in a demolition crew in the past?"

Chapter 175: Returning from the Netherworld

Lin Sanjiu was hazily aware that she had slept for a long time. Occasionally, someone would wake her and ask her a few questions. She didn't know who posed those question and she didn't know how she answered. It was as though her mind was wrapped in water, everything she heard was muddled and indistinct.

She had never been this exhausted; it was as if her brain had stopped functioning. Even if someone were to stab her in her sleep, Lin Sanjiu probably couldn't wake up.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know how long she slept but her rumbling stomach finally woke her up. She smelled the pleasant fragrance of wheat. It smelled so good that her stomach reacted and that was when Lin Sanjiu finally opened her eyes.

She was immediately greeted with a packet of bread with a small open slit.

"Look, I told you she wasn't dead!" B.Rabbit's smug voice rang out at once. Following which, the packet of bag rustled, as if someone was taking it away. "You can just wake her up with food!"

Lin Sanjiu felt as though she hadn't eaten for a year, so how would she let the food in front of her 'escape'? She leaped right up, with a motion too agile for someone who had been in a long slumber and pressed the bread down to the ground.

If Xueqin didn't draw her hand back in time, that force from Lin Sanjiu would have broken two fingers of hers.

"Huh? What happened? Where am I... Where am I?" Lin Sanjiu tore off a large chunk of bread using her teeth. Her mouth was stuffed with bread, "Fei, Fei kuyyan.."

"I know, I know," Xueqin understood what Lin Sanjiu was saying

but she couldn't help feeling embarrassed on Lin Sanjiu's behalf. "Eat slowly. You can talk after you finish your food. We still have lots of time to spare."

After Lin Sanjiu bit her own tongue twice, tears welled in her eyes due to the pain but she quickly swallowed the entire bread. After that, she took some time to look around her.

When she woke up, it was dark so she couldn't see much. When Lin Sanjiu was eating, Xueqin held her [Ability Polishing Agent] and illuminated the area nearby, allowing Lin Sanjiu to make sense of her surroundings.

[This seems like the interior of a ball.] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself. The shoddy handicraft and uneven finish made it difficult for Lin Sanjiu to even classify it as a Special Item. She stepped forward and realized that they were surrounded by a large plastic material. She didn't know how many layers of that material surrounded them, but it had completely blocked out any light from the outside.

Lin Sanjiu could hear the familiar swishing sound of the sap around them. She turned her head sharply and looked at her long-lost companions with shock. Her mouth was wide open.

"Did we go back into the rhizomes?"

"Ah, yes." B.Rabbit's fur may be mangled, but that couldn't hide the faint pride on its face that he tried to suppress. "We didn't do much. We just built this 'boat' when you were asleep. We are traveling to the surface against the flow of the tree sap.

Lin Sanjiu looked vacantly at her companions. She had many questions on her mind but she blurted the most important question that bothered her, "Where is Hui Chuyan?"

"Don't worry. She is not in the apple tree," Xueqin answered. Xueqin pushed B.Rabbit backward, afraid that it would ramble on and deviate from the topic, "It was time for her to go to the next

world. She was sent away when we were in the rhizomes."

Lin Sanjiu was stunned for a moment before she remembered Hui Chuyan telling her that it was nearly her time to go to another world. However, Lin Sanjiu didn't expect that it would be this soon, so she found it rather abrupt.

"Although she was unconscious when she was sent away, it is far better than being absorbed by those apple trees." Despite her usual poker-faced expression, Xuqin couldn't help shuddering when she talked about those trees, "Those things are too freaky..."

"After you fell asleep, we weren't quite sure of the situation. We rested in the same spot for a few days. We also saw those snake-faced people eating those apples..." One of the twins added softly. Somehow, her voice seemed to be ridden with guilt.

"We were worried that the snake-faced people would find us soon or later if we remained there," she sounded as if she was trying to justify something.

"Aii..." the other twin, the older sister, suddenly let out a long sigh without any reason.

They weren't the only ones looking rather dejected. The complicated expression on Snow's reddened face was clear for all to see despite his beard. Xueqin shot a glance at them and pursed her lips with a cold expression. She was obviously aware why the others were acting this way, but she seemed adamant not to talk about it.

In the end, it was Rabbit who spoke.

"The snake-faced people seemed extremely furious. They carried away the corpse of their companion, probably the one you defeated, and checked all the trees carefully. We had a hard time hiding from them... After they left, we woke you up a few times and asked you some questions. We finally found out what you knew and got an understanding of the whole series of events."

At this point, even B.Rabbit found it difficult to speak about what had happened. "That son of a b*tch. He is such a letdown. I'm not going to cover this up for him!" Then, B.Rabbit ranted angrily, "After we knew the effects of eating those flesh apples, Error 517 secretly—"

"Ate two flesh apples when we were chopping off tree barks to create the boat." A young teen's monotonous voice, coming from outside the plastic material, accompanied by the sloshing sound of fluid, suddenly finished B.Rabbit's sentence.

Lin Sanjiu was shocked. She only realized then that Error 517 wasn't in this 'ball'. She only got to know the five members group through B.Rabbit, so she didn't know them that well personally. As the light was dim inside the ball, she failed to notice that there was a missing person.

"Why... Why is he outside?" Lin Sanjiu was very shocked. "What exactly... is going on?"

This time, even Rabbit stopped talking as his expression grew sour.

The awkward silence continued for a few seconds until the teenager outside the spherical boat ended up being the person answering her. He seemed to deliberately maintain a sort of flat, monotonous tone, "Sister Lin, I'll answer you. They are ashamed of me now so they don't want to bring this up."

"Sister Lin, have you ever seen my ability in our past few days of interaction? This is normal because my ability isn't anything special... Oh, don't ask me what my ability is, it is all in the past anyway. I've been constantly relying on others, holding others back. I had enough of it too. Since I had a chance to change that, why shouldn't I seize it? Those people could be considered dead anyway... I can't always suffer in pain for nothing, without gaining anything, right?"

Lin Sanjiu listened in a daze. This was totally beyond anything

she expected. She would never have thought that one of the companions she rescued personally would choose to eat one of those flesh apples...

"There's no need to eat the entire thing, digging out and eating the part of the bulging veins, the portions which had a living reaction, is sufficient." From his voice, Error 517 still sounded like he was forcing himself to be calm. "It didn't fail to meet my expectations. Both of the apples I ate gave me a huge payback... The price, in my opinion, was well worth it."

Before Lin Sanjiu said anything, Snow chastised hoarsely, "What about us? Are we less important than those two abilities?"

For a while, there was only silence outside.

After some time, Error 517 spoke up again, and even laughed softly, "Brother Snow, if I didn't have those two abilities, could we still swim up against the flow of the fluid in these roots? I can't control how you guys view me... but we are friends, after all, and Sister Lin is my benefactor, so I will pull this boat to the surface no matter what."

Lin Sanjiu only understood then that the reason this boat could advance against the stream was actually because Error 517 was pulling it from the outside!

With that, she was in no position to say anything about it. All of them clearly condemned his actions, yet they had to depend on him. Under such circumstances, it wasn't surprising that B.Rabbit looked so aggrieved.

Even after some time, no one in the boat said a word. Lin Sanjiu vaguely heard Error 517 sighing outside. Then, there was only silence.

The sloshing noises of the flowing fluid became the only sound which accompanied them along their path.

The route back was far longer than the one they took to arrive.

Error 517 seemed to be pushing himself to his limits. Every day, he would enter the 'boat' to have a bite of food, and without even sleeping he would go back outside to continue pulling. Lin Sanjiu wanted to persuade him to rest, but she couldn't bring herself to say anything when Error 517 gave her a distant expression.

[Forget it, everyone live by their own principles...] Lin Sanjiu muttered inwardly.

Before she woke up, she had slept for slightly more than a week. Then, the group were in the rhizomes for almost a month before they heard from Error 517 that it was getting brighter outside, so it seemed that they were nearing the surface.

Following the direction Lin Sanjiu provided, they were heading toward the area she had dug up. When they were near the path she dug, they broke out from the roots' tough epidermis and finally returned to the surface.

When the long-awaited sunlight shone on their bodies again, almost all of them felt as if they had returned from a surreal experience from a lifetime ago.

Error 517 secretly left on the night that they returned and did not even bid farewell to any of them.

"Actually, I didn't rebuke him that harshly..."

"He probably couldn't accept it himself." Lin Sanjiu sighed dully and patted B.Rabbit's despondent head.

[Right now, there is another urgent matter—] Just as she thought about it, she heard a sudden cry from afar, "Sister Lin! You finally came back! We are starving to death!"

Chapter 176: Gong Daoyi Would Be Very Disappointed

Lin Sanjiu did not expect that her trip would last more than two months. When she saw Bai Xiaoke, Green Melon, and Qian Zhengguan again, she noticed that there was only hunger in their eyes. When they found the bag of food left by Lin Sanjiu, the three of them started rationing. However, even though they only ate a mouthful of bread each day, they already finished all their rations more than half a month ago.

As they couldn't step on the ground, they spent a significant amount of effort planting a few more tree stumps in Lin Sanjiu's excavation area. Every day, they would choose a different location and let Green Melon float up to the sky so that he could spot any signs of Lin Sanjiu returning.

"Sister Lin, if you still hadn't come back, we were planning to eat that Qian guy," Green Melon said while burping after he had his fill. "In the end, we didn't eat him because he was too skinny..."

Qian Zhengguan's face darkened. While he continued eating his noodles, he moved over to another tree stump. He was so thin that his face had sunken in, and his round eyes now looked larger than before.

Green Melon's careless joke immediately evoked some sentiments from the others—Snow knew that Error 517 had always been a close friend of Green Melon. He and the twins called Green Melon aside and talked to him softly.

Seeing them, Lin Sanjiu sighed and looked away. After escaping a life-and-death situation and meeting each other again, Xueqin and Bai Xiaoke continued bickering, while Xueqin occasionally let out a dry laugh. Meanwhile, B.Rabbit recently found a new hobby. Once he found a spot to settle down, he would find a bottle of beer from some unknown place. He would pour the beer into the [Bubbles

Blowing Girl]'s hand so that it formed a small pool, then he would bury his face in the pool and start drinking.

"Hey, we need to spend more effort looking for a Consular Officer," Lin Sanjiu walked over and smiled drily when she saw B.Rabbit drinking. "Even though I got a visa for some reason, you guys don't have one... Most of the people here had been sucked into the apple tree, I'm not sure how we're going to find a Consular Officer."

Her voice wasn't particularly loud, but momentarily attracted the attention of the rest. Even Snow and the others who were discussing softly stopped and looked over.

Considering the current times, do you think any Consular Officer would survive?" Bai Xiaoke couldn't help sighing. "We have been here for two months and we didn't see a single person."

Qian Zhengguan listened to them with a blank expression and even spat out a bit of noodle.

"Who gave you that visa?" B.Rabbit immediately asked the most important question, "Is that person still around?"

Lin Sanjiu shook her head. When she thought of Nüwa, she recalled how she imitated that woman's thought process. She reminded herself to find time to return to her [School of Higher Consciousness] as she didn't hear everything that Mrs. Manas wanted to say."

"I guess we don't have a choice," Xueqin added worriedly. After thinking about it for some time, she consoled Lin Sanjiu, "I think you should just use your visa and head to that world. As for us... we might meet each other again in the Twelve Worlds Centrum, right?"

"Well... actually..." Qian Zhengguan ate a large mouth of noodles so it took a while for him to finish swallowing the food in his mouth. "I..."

B.Rabbit did not hear his faint words at all. He waved his paws and exclaimed spiritedly, "That's right! We can set a meeting point! We are all manly people, we don't have to be together day and night!"

"I don't think that is the right way to use these words..." Bai Xiaoke immediately pointed out.

"This is my first time without a visa, I feel a little scared..."

"I wonder when will be the next time we will meet again."

While everyone started discussing, Qian Zhengguan realized that no one was listening to him. He finally raised his voice and it startled everyone, "Hey! Listen to me! Didn't you realize something?"

Eight pairs of curious eyes turned to him.

"My God. It is quite worrying to witness your stupidity..." Qian Zhengguan scratched his head, "Can't you guys associate my name with something?"

The crowd looked at him for a few seconds trying to process his words. Someone suddenly gasped, "Huh?!"

"Qian Zhengguan, you are a Consular Officer?"

"Are you really a Consular Officer? And that is your real name?"

"To pair your name and that ability, isn't this a little too convenient?"

This blew them all away. They all started to discuss the extraordinary turn of events. Qian Zhengguan suddenly became the center of attention and felt uncomfortable. He answered a few of them timidly and approached Lin Sanjiu subconsciously, hoping to get some peace.

"We have looked far and wide for you, yet you've been hiding in plain sight," B.Rabbit shook his head and sighed.

This time, even Bai Xiaoke had to agree that his choice of words

was apt. Everyone took quite some time to calm themselves. After that, Lin Sanjiu asked urgently, "Isn't your ability [The Great Reversal Technique]? How could you also be a Consular Officer?"

If she remembered correctly, B.Rabbit once mentioned that Consular Officers usually didn't have additional abilities, so exchanging visas was the best way to keep themselves alive.

"Cough... Typically, most Consular Officers don't have a second ability... I guess I am an exception because of my birth name." Qian Zhengguan had the same confused look he always had, "Anyway, [The Great Reversal Technique] is my primary ability. My Consular Officer ability is just an auxiliary ability."

All of them looked at him with opened jaws, their eyes were filled with disbelief.

B.Rabbit was the first to react. He leaped up and said, "Why are you just standing there dumbly? Quick! Look at Xiao Jiu's visa and give us all a visa to that world!"

Lin Sanjiu took out her visa which showed 'Destination: Agriculture Farm' and carefully handed it to Qian Zhengguan. The latter answered B.Rabbit suggestion and looked at her visa with an unreliable expression on his face. While he observed it, he slowly let out a curious tone.

Lin Sanjiu had almost forgotten that this man was skilled at stringing people along. "What's wrong?" she asked hastily.

"Um, there are two matters." Qian Zhengguan showed two fingers. He spoke so sluggishly that anyone listening couldn't help having the urge to punch him a few times, just to see if they could punch out more words from him. "Firstly... this visa is a 'nameless' visa."

"What do you mean?"

"Supposedly, when Consular Officer's ability reach a certain point. That person would be able to issue nameless visas... Um,

that is to say, anyone can use this visa, not just you."

Somehow, everyone had the feeling that his eyes were sparkling when he said those words.

"Alright, I can give this visa to you. Anyway, you can't use your own visas." Lin Sanjiu made a gesture and made that decision on the spot, "What is the second matter?"

"Well, this..." Qian Zhengguan started mumbling.

"Speak!"

"Uh. Alright... As I have two abilities, my Consular Officer ability isn't well-developed."

Everyone's gaze was fixated on him.

"What do you mean by 'isn't well-developed'?" Lin Sanjiu questioned him, holding back her anger.

"I can only issue seven visas." Qian Zhengguan stuttered a bit before he quickly asked, "Would you still give this visa to me?"

Chapter 177: School of Higher Consciousness

"Why do I feel that this is part of your plans..." Lin Sanjiu let out a long sigh. She felt a slight itch to hit and fight with someone. Qian Zhengguan, who was sitting beside her, seemed to sense something and laughed sheepishly, trying to prove that he meant no harm.

Even though he was just... half... a Consular Officer, his ability was simply too crappy. It was basically a sh*tty ability.

"I wouldn't care if you could only issue seven visas. At most, I wouldn't get one from you." Lin Sanjiu held her face in her hands. Her words came out a little muffled through her fingers, "But, why is the destination of EVERY single visa different?"

Before that, when all of them found out that he could only issue seven visas, B.Rabbit and herself debated vehemently. For her, she felt that it was alright not to get a visa this time. She wanted to give up her chance of getting a visa. However, B.Rabbit remembered what had happened in the previous world. He was afraid that Lin Sanjiu would randomly get a visa in the next world and end up getting caught by Puppeteer. So, he wanted to accompany her no matter what. Once he became agitated, he started swearing.

Who would have known that they would quickly find themselves speechless? Since all of them were heading to different destinations, there wasn't necessary for them to argue anymore.

"Didn't I warn you that my ability isn't that well-developed?" Qian Zhengguan rubbed his own face sluggishly. There was a painful mark on his face, as B.Rabbit kicked his cheek after staring angrily at the young man. Qian Zhengguan simply accepted that abuse and wasn't angry at all, he continued speaking with a gentle tone, "Sister Lin, I want to thank you for giving me your 'Agriculture Farm' visa..."

Lin Sanjiu answered him with a snort, "Well, I can survive no matter where I go. But, look at you. You look like that sort of unlucky bastard that never gets any lucky breaks."

At first, she was still a little worried that Nüwa gave her that visa with some ill intentions. However, after using her [Consciousness Mimicry] once, she erased that worry from her mind. It was impossible for her [Consciousness Mimicry] to fully imitate her target's thought process and could only replicate some parts of it. Judging from this, a partial imitation of Nüwa's thought process already delivered such results, if Nüwa really wanted to kill her, would she still be alive today?

With this, she decisively gave the visa to Qian Zhengguan. The small-faced young man who knew he got the better end of the stick continued mumbling in a long-winded manner. However, Lin Sanjiu's mind had drifted off and she started thinking about her [School of Higher Consciousness]. She had no patience to listen to him prattle on. She hit his back twice and hurriedly excused herself, "I'm leaving for a while." She jumped off one of the wooden stumps and walked away while he coughed.

Right now, the quietest place she could find was at the tree roots. Lin Sanjiu sat cross-legged on one of the large roots and took a deep breath. This time, with a single thought, her consciousness quickly slipped into her mindscape, as if someone dragged her down violently.

"You're finally here—"

It wasn't really that dark in her mindscape. Rather than true darkness, she found herself surrounded by layers and layers of colorful memories. Finally, she fell into a... classroom.

The speakers, which represented Mrs. Manas, vibrated with emotions, "Lin Sanjiu, where did you go? Didn't I tell you to come back to school immediately after you used your [Consciousness Mimicry]?"

Before answering her, Lin Sanjiu looked around. Even though there was now a blackboard, and the words 'Learn well and improve daily!' were painted in red above the teacher's desk, but it seemed as though this classroom was poorly converted from the previous kindergarten classroom. There were only some slight changes to the decorations, and it really looked like a shabby attempt. Even her 'classmates' didn't change.

"I can't believe I even had some expectations..." Lin Sanjiu grumbled softly and sat down beside the Transformer figurine.

"I am not responsible for this half-assed decoration," the teacher who had a strong connection to Lin Sanjiu's subconsciousness spoke quickly. "Everything here is created through your higher consciousness, since you only have such a low level of higher consciousness—way lesser than your classmates—I have no choice but to make do with this little classroom."

Lin Sanjiu looked at the Transformer figurine sitting beside her, but she didn't feel that his higher consciousness could be much higher than hers.

"When you were in kindergarten, we briefly touched on the topic of perception using your higher consciousness. Then, the school had to close due to various reasons..." Mrs. Manas said regretfully, "So, you missed the chance to learn quite a lot."

"Why don't you give the lecture from the start?" Anyway, Lin Sanjiu had many questions she wanted to ask. "What did you do when I was at Oasis? How did you help me maintain my ability to that extent?"

Mrs. Manas muttered to herself for a few seconds, as though she was considering how she could answer Lin Sanjiu. Just then, Lin Sanjiu heard a scratching sound from the blackboard. A few strokes of white chalk gradually appeared on the blackboard. This scene was simply like a scene of a haunting.

"This involves the essence of what one's higher consciousness

entails. If we look at one's higher consciousness as the maximum potential of a person's ability, we can view a person's higher consciousness like a cheat machine. It allows a posthuman to develop his or her ability in various ways and open up many possibilities. For example, enhanced perception, consciousness mimicry, etc. They are not truly evolved abilities but skills that you gained because [School of Higher Consciousness] opened a new pathway for you."

[Do you think I am really an elementary school student?] Lin Sanjiu thought to herself as she nodded to show that she understood what the teacher said.

"In the future, we will learn about the vast uses of your higher consciousness. Even when your body has not reached the right conditions to activate certain abilities, you can use your higher consciousness as a fuel... Of course, this is a drastic measure and I won't recommend it."

So, that was the reason why she couldn't enter her [School of Higher Consciousness] after the incident at Oasis. She must have used up too much of her higher consciousness. When she recalled how she slept for more than a week after imitating Nüwa's thought process, she felt a slight headache, "So, I would fall into a deep sleep when I used up too much of my higher consciousness?"

When Mrs. Manas heard Lin Sanjiu, she sighed, as though she felt that this was a difficult question and her following explanation would be very confusing.

"Right now, your higher consciousness is neither high nor low. Normally, you wouldn't get so tired after only using your [Consciousness Mimicry] once. That situation was created by two main reasons. Firstly, I borrowed a little of your higher consciousness, but that isn't important, so we will go to the next point."

[Hey, I am more interested in the first reason.] Lin Sanjiu

thought silently to herself.

"The intellect, mental capacity, and psyche of the target you chose to imitate... Putting it gently, her capabilities far exceed yours. You can understand this, right? Your target is stronger, so you have to use up more of your higher consciousness. On the other hand, if they're weaker, imitating them would be so easy you wouldn't even drop a sweat.

"That is to say, though I can imitate anyone, I am bounded by the upper limits of my higher consciousness?" Lin Sanjiu couldn't help confirming what she heard.

The speakers paused, giving the impression that Mrs. Manas didn't prepare for her lessons. "Theoretically, you are right. But, you made a mistake. You can't just imitate anybody you know."

"Huh?" Lin Sanjiu was a little surprised, "There are even conditions to imitate someone?"

"The person has to be someone you understand to some extent. If you tried to imitate Gong Daoyi now, you would find that you would not be able to successfully activate your Consciousness Mimicry. This is because you have zero understanding of the way he thinks, even though both of you fought together before. He is a person who had sealed away his thought process from the outside world."

When Mrs. Manas mentioned that, Lin Sanjiu remembered that dawn when she was together with Nüwa. Even though they only spent a short time together, Nuwa had an open attitude toward her and hid nothing—Lin Sanjiu still had a strong lasting impression of the woman's personality, tone, and her tranquil yet extreme views.

On the other hand, when she thought of Gong Daoyi, she could only remember the faint smile on his beautiful face. Just when Lin Sanjiu was deep in her thoughts, the classroom started to shake violently. She was just about to jump up when she remembered that she was in her own mindscape. She couldn't help blurting out

a question, "What's going on?"

She barely uttered those words when the walls of the classroom shifted two meters inward. The room wasn't even that large at the start. The room was now half its size and she felt that the walls were closing in on her.

"This is bad," Mrs. Manas said and made a soft sound that Lin Sanjiu couldn't understand. "Lin Sanjiu, we will end the lesson here today. Remember, in the end, you might not be able to keep this pathway open... so you definitely have to keep practicing."

"What hap—"

Before she could finish her sentence, Lin Sanjiu opened her eyes unwittingly. She had returned to reality. In the distance, she could still see her companions were still chatting away. She checked her own body condition and found that there was nothing wrong at all.

Chapter 178: Goodbye Forever, Garden of Eden!

"Did you memorize everything? According to Sayo, each of the worlds in the Twelve World Centrum has its own famous meeting point. There are many hostels near those meeting points which provide their customers a place to stay for some time while they wait for their companions... Don't lose your way then," B.Rabbit said with a serious expression. Lin Sanjiu already heard the same instructions from him yesterday.

She smiled and rubbed B.Rabbit's head, "Do you think I am stupid? Don't worry. I will definitely find a way to get to the Twelve Worlds Centrum."

B.Rabbit unhappily groomed his fur, which had been messed up by Lin Sanjiu. After the sap from the apple tree corroded his fur, it grew out again. Now, he was like a mop head. "And, you must stay vigilant! I think Puppeteer already listed you in the Consular Officer database... Once you reach the Twelve Worlds Centrum, you must hide immediately!"

"I know. Don't worry."

Two to three months after the gang of four and Bai Xiaoke were randomly sent off to other worlds, it was finally B.Rabbit's turn to go. As he evolved around the same time as Lin Sanjiu in Hyperthermal Hell, their sent-off period was almost around the same time. Lin Sanjiu watched as B.Rabbit disappeared before her eyes, like bubbles. She stood on the same spot, staring vacantly for some time. Knowing that he was heading to a world called "Carnival", she let out a long sigh and felt uneasy.

She was left with Xueqin and Qian Zhengguan. Xueqin would leave about two months after her, but Qian Zhengguan had to endure another ten months. Right now, he was looking a little bitter.

"I don't know when I will leave, so I need to tell you what I want to say as soon as possible." Lin Sanjiu said while she looked at Xueqin. The latter was trying to maintain her poker face, but she would look lost occasionally. After two months, it would be the first time she would be sent off to another world. But before that, Xueqin would only have an unreliable Qian Zhengguan beside her. Lin Sanjiu was a little worried so she spoke with Xueqin and gave her detailed pointers on things she should take note of.

On top of that, Lin Sanjiu kept only two days worth of food with her. She left the rest of the food supplies behind and even gave Qian Zhengguan all the dried fish she had collected from Hyperthermal Hell. "Just sit on the tree stumps and no one can steal this food from you... You have to ration your supplies, okay?"

Qian Zhengguan blinked his large eyes and spoke in the usual sluggish way, "Sister Lin, if there is any way I can help you in the future..."

In her heart, Lin Sanjiu was rolling her eyes. She still couldn't tolerate his slow manner of speaking.

After she made all the necessary arrangements, there wasn't any sign that she was going to be sent away. In the end, she decided to find a place to sit and take stock of her items.

She rarely had time to do this, so she decided to check her whole card inventory. She had almost used up the daily necessities she collected from Hyperthermal Hell. She already threw away her mouthpart weapon in the black tower. In retrospect, she felt that it was quite a waste throwing away such a convenient weapon. Now, she was only left with a few items from Hyperthermal Hell that reminded her of her hometown... Lin Sanjiu sighed faintly as she looked at the lavender-scented candle in her hand and thought of those days she spent at the supermarket.

Luckily, she replenished many supplies when she was in the Garden of Eden city. Recently, the item she used most frequently

was the Vibroblade that she took from the Garden of Eden Laboratories. Though it looked like an ordinary long knife, it was far sharper than any ordinary knife since it cut using micro-vibration. There wasn't anything particular that the vibroblade couldn't cut through, at most, it was only a matter of speed.

In comparison, the gun that she snatched from the soldiers in the city was large, cumbersome and difficult to control. Lin Sanjiu pondered for a moment and decided to keep the gun together with her knife, just in case she needed it in the future.

Apart from her [Bubbles Blowing Girl] which could send out explosive bubbles and the useless storage device for that [Microorganism Cloud] she already used, she had three other high-tech items she took from the Garden of Eden Laboratories. Each of these items shared the unique blood-thirsting qualities that Garden of Eden possessed. She gave the remaining items to B.Rabbit and the rest. She had to admit that her haul from the Garden of Eden was pretty good.

[Flesh-melting Hairdryer]: Do not use this to dry your hair. Do not use this to dry your hair. Do not use this to dry your hair! As per its name, the Flesh-melting Hairdryer would melt a person's body once you use it on that person... This item can only be used with a fuel pellet. You can use this once with each fuel pellet.

"I only took four pellets that time because I was in a rush. That should be enough, right? This item is way too dangerous for humanity," Lin Sanjiu commented, temporarily forgetting the number of people she had killed. Then, she stored both the item together with the fuel pellets.

[Tornado Whip]: There isn't any other weapon with such a straight-forward name, it doesn't even need a description. The tornado created from the whip is not that strong, with a diameter of two meters. An interesting point to note is that the creator actually invented this item to watch rose petals dance in the air.

[Mewing Alarm Clock]: Isn't it annoying to wake up to that same mewing early in the morning, every single day? But, this alarm clock is designed for researchers who like historical cat sculptures, so the sound from the clock is quite cute.

"What is its function? Is it really just an alarm clock?" Lin Sanjiu was dumbfounded. She didn't know why she took this weird item with her. "So, you can only use this like a normal alarm clock? Wasn't this supposed to be some sort of dangerous item?"

Lin Sanjiu stared blankly at the clock which had the shape of a cat's head. Finally, she decided to store it back. Anyway, it did look nice and it didn't take up any space after she converted it into a card.

Her [Dog Frisbee] card was kept together with that clock. This item had lured them to the tree roots, which then lead to the troublesome series of events. In the end, she couldn't find its geographical target, so Lin Sanjiu did not know what to do with it.

"Did Er Dao discover some of the tree roots. So, he placed the geographical marker on them?" After thinking for some time, Lin Sanjiu could only come to this conclusion. If it works by broadcasting some sort of wave, perhaps the area that its signal covers would expand with the tree roots?" Without its geographical marker, this item seemed pretty useless. [Forget it, I will just keep it. Anyway, it weighs nothing.]

When Lin Sanjiu thought of Er Dao, she felt some complex emotions as she took out the card with his corpse. Honestly speaking, after he died because of her, his corpse really helped her out... Without his blood, Lin Sanjiu would've died from radiation.

"There are tree roots everywhere... When I go to the next world, I will find a good spot to bury you," she said softly and stored the card properly. The rest of the cards were some anti-radiation suits, some clothes she took from Guang Zhu's house, and some daily necessities. She searched through the items and only kept a

portion of them.

In addition, she had some items from Hyperthermal Hell.

She was still wearing her [Pygmalion Choker], and she had half a bag of [Cat Litter]. She realized that she didn't even use her [That spring, when the cherry blossoms fell, your sweet laughter melted my world]. Her opponents in the Garden of Eden made it unnecessary for her to use her [Oh My God! My wallet is missing!]. She kept this card together with her [Teru Teru Bozu Defense System] and [Another/Way - A Mermaid Cultivation Drink] cards.

Preparing beforehand, Lin Sanjiu managed to get her companions to record their description of an ability using her [Tape recorder]. She collected 14 recordings in this world, on top of the descriptions she collected in the previous world, she definitely had sufficient recording for her next world.

Lin Sanjiu's [Ability Polishing Agent] had been reduced to her official flashlight, whereas [Rob the Poor to feed the Rich box] was so valuable that she didn't even take it out often.

"Ah... this." Lin Sanjiu picked a card from the pile. There was a picture of Ren Nan's dead body on the card. "Maybe, I should just bury the bodies at the same time?"

After such a long time, Lin Sanjiu was surprised that she was at peace even when she saw the picture of her dead former boyfriend who wanted to kill her. She stored the card. After she cleaned up her card inventory and stored everything properly, she looked down at herself. There was still no sign that she was going to be sent off.

"If I don't have a visa, I could be sent off later? Maybe I should look at my abilities..." After she mumbled this, everything went dark. "I'm leaving!" She barely managed to yell out before she disappeared from the Garden of Eden.

Chapter 179: The Third World

When she was alive, her skin was so warm, so moist and it always had a honey-colored tan. It had only been an hour but her body had stiffened and her skin was pale white. At first glance, one could even imagine how cold her skin would feel.

Her eyes were wide open and her dull, lifeless amber irises laid motionless in her eye sockets.

Without the burning fuel of life, her limbs quickly grew stiff and her lips became purple-green. Her shoulder-length hair, which had grown out in the Garden of Eden, lay messily on the ground. Some of her hair covered half her face. There was a white bandage around her neck and she was wearing a black singlet, a pair of combat pants and slightly dirty boots.

There was an upside-down reflection of Lin Sanjiu's lifeless face on a train carriage's window. Even though, by some sick fate, there seemed to be a tradition of her 'collecting a dead body every time she arrived at a new world', Lin Sanjiu probably could never anticipate that she would need to store her own dead body in this world.

This all started 23 hours ago...

—

Lin Sanjiu was sent off to another world later than expect and in a very sudden manner. She did not know if this was due to having no visa, because she had no basis for comparison. The darkness in front of her seemed to only last a second, yet it also seemed really long. When she opened her eyes, the large dice in front of her had just landed on the ground. The top surface showed two black words.

Even though she went through this once, she still felt so nervous that her throat became dry. She could read the words but they

didn't really make much sense to her. "Kisaragi Station?"

Lin Sanjiu's light amber eyes revealed her wavering expression. She had no idea what sort of world to expect from its name. [Why is this name so weird? And why does it sound so familiar, like I've heard it before.]

"Well, I will know it when I get there."

Based on her experiences up to now, Lin Sanjiu could be considered a veteran. No matter how weird or strange things would be, she felt that she had already gone through quite a lot, so she didn't feel all that anxious. She was just a little curious about the next world.

Lin Sanjiu didn't feel anything odd. When she involuntarily opened her eyes once again, the dimension where the dice was had already disappeared. She first noticed a light gray surface, following which she felt her legs moving downward. As it had been some time since Lin Sanjiu experienced this, she was even a little shocked. She nearly tripped herself before she realized that she was standing on a downward moving escalator. The gray surface was just the wall beside the handrails of the escalator.

The escalator steps moved downward and they smoothly disappeared within the machinery once they reached the bottom. The movements created a soft buzzing sound while Lin Sanjiu walked down the escalator in a daze.

This place wasn't in ruins like Hyperthermal Hell, and it didn't have those extraordinary sci-fi elements that Garden of Eden possessed. This space seemed rather normal, devoid of anything unusual. The large ceramic floor tiles looked a little yellowish, as though they already had some age. There were a few empty drink cups beside a dustbin which was lined with a rubbish bag. She could see a map of a metro system in the dark passage where she was standing...

Lin Sanjiu didn't expect that 'Kisaragi Station' was only a single

train station. Or, a better way to put it: she was really in a train station. If it wasn't for the fact that there was no one around, she would have thought that she had returned to her daily work routine as she walked through this place. Her surroundings were very quiet. The occasional sparking sounds from the dusky-yellow fluorescent lights rang out resoundingly in the empty train station. In this world, it was as if someone had erased the crowds, the noises... everything.

The only thing that continued functioning was that empty train station she was in.

As her own footsteps echoed through the empty platform, Lin Sanjiu sometimes had this weird misperception that there were other people behind her. The cold wind flowing in from the tunnel caused goosebumps to appear on her exposed skin. It must be winter there right now. Even with her posthuman constitution, she couldn't help sneezing a few times.

"I have to look for a winter coat when I get out..." Lin Sanjiu rubbed her own arms vigorously and decided to look for the exit to leave the train station. However, she was unsuccessful.

After circling the station a few times, she couldn't find an exit. She even climbed up the downward moving escalator and found another train platform. Yet, she found no other exit which would lead her back to the surface. Lin Sanjiu finally realized only after twenty minutes that the train station was sealed.

"I guess this isn't just any random train station in this apocalyptic world..." Lin Sanjiu held on to the handrails of the escalator and returned to the place where she first arrived. Suddenly, she noticed something she did not discover previously. She couldn't help staring vacantly at it, "What sort of apocalyptic world is this? Why is there a vending machine here?"

Amidst the silence, a vending machine, with rusty corners, stood in a corner of the train station. The light in the machine reflected

on the package of the various snacks and drinks within it, making them look very bright.

When Lin Sanjiu approached it, she could hear the sounds it produced, proving that it was operational. It was even a little warm. Lin Sanjiu did not have any money and she did not plan to pay. She knew that if she converted the vending machine into one of her cards, the food inside the machine would also be stored in the same card, so she cut its electric cable and converted the entire vending machine in a card.

[I think there is quite a lot of food in there. It would probably last for a week. I don't think it will be hard to survive here—]

"Huh?" Before she could relax, she suddenly felt doubtful again. The [Vending Machine] card in her hand was slightly different from her other cards. The card was like an old photo that had been accidentally over-exposed. Most of the colors used in the picture had already faded. It was as if the card had been faintly washed with white paint. Even the words on the cards were blurry. At first glance, one would easily assume that this card had been around for a few decades.

[Vending Machine]

This is an item from Kisaragi Station. There are many snacks and beverages inside this machine. Most of the food isn't that healthy. No, perhaps, you don't need the food from this vending machine.

There was only this simple description on the card. It did not mention the reason for this unusual difference. But somehow, Lin Sanjiu felt bothered by that line, 'perhaps, you don't need'.

"Forget it. Who cares. The most important thing is that it's edible." After contemplating for some time, she stored the card. "Right now, I have to find a spot to blast a hole out of this place."

Since there wasn't any exit in this train station, Lin Sanjiu decided to create one herself. However, just when she took her

first step, she heard a loud rumbling sound. This was accompanied by two beams of bright light. The rhythm sound approached the train platform, getting louder and louder. Even the ground started shaking slightly.

Lin Sanjiu was caught off guard. Her hair danced with the wind blowing in from the tunnel. She gathered her hair together, revealing a shocked expression. Blood drained from her face.

A train drove into the platform and slowed down. The lights in the train carriages were very bright, so she could clearly see the green train seats. Oddly, all the carriages were empty, just like the train station. There was no one on the train. When the train stopped, the doors of the train opened at the same time, but Lin Sanjiu was the only passenger standing at the platform. It was only after she absent-mindedly entered the train, that she somehow realized a problem. "Um... Before the train arrived at the station, why wasn't there any sound?"

Chapter 180: Kisaragi Station

The monotonous sound of the train riding on the track continued rhythmically for a very long time. As it was traveling through a tunnel, the only rapidly changing scene outside the window was a patch of darkness. There weren't any other posthumans, from other worlds, in the quiet and empty train carriages. Lin Sanjiu sat on the train for a long time before she could react to this situation.

[Isn't this an apocalyptic world?]

Although, she didn't see any survivors around, what could explain the working lights, escalator, and high-speed train?

[Besides, where is this train heading?] She stood up and walked around, feeling a little anxious. Even though she had already walked through the entire train once and checked every corner—even under the seats—Lin Sanjiu couldn't help feeling a sense of constant panic when she sat down silently in a seat.

The train wasn't that long, so Lin Sanjiu quickly reached the first carriage once more. When she reached the door of the driver's compartment, she found that it was tightly shut, just as before. She couldn't hear a single sound coming from the compartment and no one responded no matter how loud she yelled.

[If the train is moving, there should be someone inside, right? From the looks of this train, this shouldn't be an auto-driving train.]

She looked at the lock on the door and felt that she could break the lock with a single punch. However, this place did feel abnormal. In the end, Lin Sanjiu decided that she would just take a wait-and-see approach and observe the situation first. But, it had already been two hours since she first boarded the train, yet, the train showed no sign of stopping.

Lin Sanjiu could read the route map in the carriages but their

names were so foreign to her, that it was meaningless for her to know. On the route map, there were large gaps between the dots on the train line which represented the stations, so Lin Sanjiu concluded that this was a long-haul train. If that was the case, it wasn't strange for the traveling time to be this long.

"Tennessee Farm Station, Gaonan Station... what are these stations?" Lin Sanjiu found the names of the stations very strange. She followed the route from the first station all the way till she spotted the station where she boarded the train, Kisaragi Station, and then she conveniently looked at the next stop.

"The next stop is... Mausoleum Elementary Station?" Ironically, this name which sounded relatively normal stood out from all the other weird station names.

"Forget it. I will just sit down and wait for the next station to alight." Lin Sanjiu decided to deal with any possible situation by maintaining the status quo. She didn't notice that once she arrived in this world, she unconsciously started talking to herself more frequently. Despite surviving two apocalyptic worlds, this was the first time she felt that she was the only living person in this entire world. Unconsciously, this matter stressed her greatly. Almost as to combat the pressurizing silence and loneliness that could drive her mad, Lin Sanjiu would talk to herself every now and then.

Her voice, which filled the empty train carriage, disappeared as quickly as it sounded. Every time she was only answered by silence, and this made her feel worse. The fluorescent light in the train flickered twice, probably because the electrical contacts weren't that good.

There were some tears on the sickly green cushioned train seats and they squeaked when there were movements. The freezing winter air seeped through the gaps in the train and assaulted Lin Sanjiu like whips. Soon, Lin Sanjiu found herself cuddling into a ball.

Even though she felt very uncomfortable sitting on the seats, she wasn't willing to get up, as she felt colder and colder.

"Oh gosh! Why did I board this train without thinking?"

It was so cold that she couldn't think straight, she felt that the temperature was now -20 degrees Celsius. "When I alight at that M-whatever Elementary, I will get out even if I have to destroy the train station..." she slurred.

The unchanging patch of darkness that swept past the train as it moved forward had a sort of hypnotic effect. Furthermore, the weather was really too cold. Unexpectedly, Lin Sanjiu started to feel a little drowsy—when she was in Garden of Eden, she had to constantly stay vigilant, so she rarely slept well. Kisaragi Station was a very quiet world without much danger...

"I must not sleep..." Lin Sanjiu yawned and wiped a tear from her eyes. "Mrs. Manas, can you come out and talk to me?"

However, her mind was totally silent. Ever since she was forcefully pushed out from her School of Higher Consciousness, Mrs. Manas became very busy, and rarely answered her. Lin Sanjiu was so cold that she had no choice but to sit cross-legged while she tried to retain the little warmth from her chest using her body. She did not know when it started, but her eyelids grew heavier and heavier. She started nodding off.

Lin Sanjiu only realized that she had fallen asleep after she woke up abruptly when the train came to a sudden stop. She looked around. The train had stopped completely. The train already drove out from the tunnel at some point in time and was traveling on the outdoor tracks. Right now, Lin Sanjiu could see quite a few residential buildings and streets through the windows and the white morning mist. Perhaps she didn't see anyone because it was too early.

Seeing the train doors open, Lin Sanjiu leaped up and headed for the door, wanting to alight. Holding the edge of the door frame,

she was just about to step out of the train when she looked up unintentionally and took a glance into the distance.

[Mausoleum Elementary Station was indeed named after an elementary school—] She could suddenly confirm this seemingly useless information because she could now see the Elementary school. Lin Sanjiu had never seen a city designed in such a carefree manner. The simple train platform wasn't that big. One of the walls of the train station was made of glass. A narrow road was built very close to the glass wall, and this road led into the gates of the elementary school.

As the train station was near the school, Lin Sanjiu could clearly see the facial expressions of the group of people standing at the school gate. Lin Sanjiu's first reaction after suddenly seeing other humans in this empty, desolated world wasn't of relief. Instead, she felt goosebumps all over.

A female teacher stood in the middle of a group of children and they seemed to be leaving the school. All of them were smiling. They did not move, even though their faces had turned red from the frigid wind that lashed at them. They looked toward the train station and were all staring directly at Lin Sanjiu.

This scene was probably the ideal image for any sort of propaganda poster. The children surrounded their teacher and were smiling widely at Lin Sanjiu. But no one moved, even after a long while. It was as if they had been standing at the gates for some time and were waiting specifically for her.

"Are they mannequins?" Lin Sanjiu took a deep breath and hesitated.

No.

Noticing her hesitation, the female teacher smiled even wider, revealing her set of pearly white teeth. She raised her hands, which were originally on the shoulders of the children and gestured to Lin Sanjiu, appearing to beckon for her to come over.

The train door made two beeping sounds. It was time for the doors to close but they were blocked by Lin Sanjiu's hands. Startled by the noise, she finally drew away her attention from the smiling faces of that crowd of people. She quickly retreated back into the carriage. The doors closed instantly, separating her from the intense gaze of those people. She let out a sigh of relief.

[Those people don't look that normal...]

"I will alight at the next stop," Lin Sanjiu realized that she was drenched in cold sweat after the exchange of glances, which lasted less than a minute. As the cold wind bellowed, she was so cold that she started shivering. "The next stop is..."

It was still Mausoleum Elementary Station.

Chapter 181: We Are Here To Bring You Home

Ever since she evolved, this was the first time Lin Sanjiu doubted her eyesight. But, no matter how many times she looked at the route map, the next stop was still Mausoleum Elementary Station—the stop which was originally after Kisaragi Station had now been changed to 'Home'.

"What does this mean? Is it forcing me to alight at this station?" Lin Sanjiu stood still in the same spot while she thought about the situation. When she looked up again, she discovered that, somehow, once again, it was dark outside the train. It looked exactly like the previous part of the track before she arrived at Mausoleum Elementary.

Even though she didn't know how the train managed to operate in this manner, Lin Sanjiu decided that she would clench her teeth and alight at Mausoleum Elementary Station if she really did not have a choice. No matter how normal this train was compared to that elementary school, she knew she couldn't possibly stay on this train for fourteen months without eating or drinking.

Lin Sanjiu did not know what to make of this situation as she walked back to sit in her original seat, feeling a little confused and perplexed. Thinking about it rationally, she would feel better if she sat down, as it would help her preserve some energy, but she couldn't explain why she didn't feel like sitting. Previously, she faced the same situation. She took quite a while to convince herself to sit—Lin Sanjiu looked around at the other seats. Regardless, she didn't want to go near any of the seats.

"Nevermind. I should search for some clues in this train... If it doesn't work out, I will smash open the door to the driver's compartment." However, given the circumstances, Lin Sanjiu figured out that the driver's compartment was probably empty.

She grumbled and dragged her feet through all train carriages and started inspecting every detail.

The fluorescent light in the train carriage flickered. Lin Sanjiu was all alone. The train was traveling through a seemingly endless dark tunnel. Occasionally, the train would swerve left or right, and Lin Sanjiu would hold on to the train handle to maintain her balance. This time, she found many details she failed to notice previously. But they seemed almost useless...

"A flatten cigarette butt proves that there were other people here in the past, right? Why is there an advertisement leaflet here..."

Finding these items, which reminded her of her previous normal daily life, meant that there was some sign of human activity. This calmed Lin Sanjiu's anxiety quite a bit. Once she relaxed a little, she found it funny that she felt an aversion for the train seats. She shook her head and forced herself to sit down in a seat beside the train door. She actually planned to sit down to reserve her energy and compose herself. But seconds after she sat down, before she could think about the unusual aspects of this world, she heard a soft screech from the train brakes. The train slowed down almost instantaneously—she looked up and saw the train gradually driving toward the station platform.

[It has been less than 20 minutes, isn't this a little too fast compared to the previous time?]

The dot which represented 'Home' and the dot which represented 'Mausoleum Elementary' were still very far apart, so she assumed that it would take at least a few hours before the train arrived at the station again. She stood up to alight from the train, feeling very uncertain, but her heart froze for a second without warning.

When she saw Mausoleum Elementary the previous time, the position of the school was directly outside the very carriage she was in. Oddly, when she moved down another five train carriages, the position of the elementary school was still directly outside,

such that her field of vision was still in line with the gates of the elementary school. This was the same scene she experienced previously.

It was almost as if the gates of the school were moving according to her position. When the teachers and children saw her, they smiled even more brilliantly. This time, Lin Sanjiu could even see the mole on the teacher's cheek very clearly.

This was because... the road had disappeared.

Previously, there was definitely a narrow road from the train station to the school. Without this road, Lin Sanjiu couldn't imagine how people would actually walk to the school. On the other hand, without the road, the entrance to Mausoleum Elementary was almost right outside the glass wall of the train station. It was as though the entire school had shifted one large step forward.

Naturally, the people standing at the gates of the school were now closer to the train station. The boy who was standing at the foremost position was so close to the glass wall of the train station that he was squishing his face against the glass, showing her his oddly flatten, misshapen face. Yet, he didn't even consider moving back one step. Lin Sanjiu could still see the smile under his squished, crooked nose.

"If I don't alight here, are they coming over to receive me?" A terrifying thought surfaced in Lin Sanjiu's mind. She had made a firm decision to alight just a few minutes ago, but right now her determination had faded like melting snow in spring. She turned her head back and watched the cigarette butt, lying on the floor of the carriage, silently. She immediately felt that it was safer staying on the train. [Anyone else would also refuse to get off the train, right?]

[If I don't get off the train, those people might not... come to get me... Maybe, I am overthinking about this?]

The train door beeped twice almost like it was urging her to quickly make a decision. Lin Sanjiu clenched her teeth and was about to take an irrevocable step forward when she caught a glimpse of a ball of paper stuffed in the seat she was sitting previously, it was sticking out from the crevice between the back support and the cushion of the seat. She thought she saw someone's handwriting on the piece of paper as well.

When she was sitting, she didn't noticed it because of its angle. If she didn't hesitate for some time at the door, she would have missed that item...

Lin Sanjiu's heart thumped loudly, she felt like a student who had finally found an excuse not to go to school. She retreated from the door, as if escaping. When she stuck her hand into the crevice of the seat, the door closed once again.

Meanwhile, the teacher and students standing outside the glass window did not look even one bit disappointed. Their smiles were still the same. But now, each and every pair of eyes followed the train as it moved until their pupils reached the corners of their eyes.

Lin Sanjiu only let out a sigh of relief when the school disappeared out of sight. She pinched the ball of paper with her fingers and pulled it out hurriedly. As she was a bit careless, she tore the paper a little.

The paper was very thin, and it appeared to be a torn corner of a newspaper without any print. There were indeed some handwritten words on the piece of paper. Lin Sanjiu quickly unraveled the paper. When she saw the words, she couldn't help heaving a sigh of relief, as it was Chinese.

Concentrating, Lin Sanjiu read the note again and she felt a chill all over. She felt fearful as she remembered what just happened.

"Do not alight from the train! You must not alight from the train —"

It looked like a female's handwriting. It was quite messy, as if the person had scribbled this note in a hurry. Half of the second 'train' on the note had been torn. There were definitely words on the other half of the paper but Lin Sanjiu didn't know where it was.

[Do not alight from the train!] Momentarily, this was the only sentence which echoed in Lin Sanjiu's mind. Cold wind continued blowing at her. Shivering and at a loss as to what to do, she looked up. If it was up to her, she didn't want to get off this train either. She might have limited food supply, but with that [Vending Machine], it wasn't really a pressing problem.

The real problem now was...

Lin Sanjiu stared fixedly at the train's route map. The next stop was still Mausoleum Elementary Station. [What should I do if that teacher and her students come even closer the next time around.]

And... she couldn't help thinking about a horrible thing. If the girl who wrote the note didn't alight from the train... where was the girl now?

Chapter 182: She Did a Sudden 180

Lin Sanjiu didn't know if she had miscalculated, but this time the train arrived at the station in less than 20 minutes. Lin Sanjiu had already anticipated this. She grabbed the note tightly in her hand and did not move from her seat. She forced herself to turn her head around to look outside through the window. Without the feeling of the note in her hand, reminding her about the messy handwriting, Lin Sanjiu really wouldn't be able to resist just rushing outside to free herself from this torture.

This time, the glass wall of the train station disappeared.

Without the glass wall, half of the train station had already merged with the elementary school building. The gates of the school and its fences were now, without reason, behind a bench in the train station. The signboard with the words "Mausoleum Elementary School" blocked the entire view of the station's name.

That teacher and her students maintained the same postures and smiles. They had also moved forward about ten meters. That skin of the boy, whose face was squished by the glass wall, had a reddish mark. The female teacher, who seemed to have limitless patience, raised her hand and gestured once again for Lin Sanjiu to come to her.

Lin Sanjiu shifted her gaze away hastily, and her hands were trembling slightly. The people in front of this elementary school were really too strange. She had never met any people like them before. Though they didn't attack her, they didn't plan to let her go either...

"What... what are they?" She only noticed that she was stuttering after she said those words. It didn't take long before the train door closed once again. The train resumed its march forward, rumbling, leaving the school far behind and entering a tunnel, embracing the same familiar darkness. Without looking at the map, Lin Sanjiu

was 100% sure that the next station was still Mausoleum Elementary Station.

She took a few deep breaths consecutively, but she couldn't calm herself down at all. Perhaps, the cold temperature caused all the pores on her skin to contract. She was cold from head to toe.

Lin Sanjiu had unconsciously crushed the note in her hand, so it was now quite tattered. This time the train would arrive at the station much quicker. She knew that she needed to think of something.

While Lin Sanjiu contemplated, she could feel a breeze of cold wind blowing from her back. The hairs on the back of her neck stood up at once. She turned her head behind sharply, feeling extremely nervous. There was still no one in the train carriages.

As the train was a little old, the cold wind could seep through the various cracks from the wear over the years. The wind became stronger and stronger each time. Lin Sanjiu exhaled and mocked herself for jumping at shadows. She touched the bandage on her neck. Feeling the hard choker on her neck, she felt a little less worried.

[In the worst case scenario, I'll just fight!]

It didn't matter if those were humans or duoluozhongs, they could still die, right?

She took a stand on that matter and made up her mind. After this, she felt more confident about her plan and that immediately reduced her feeling of helplessness. Estimating that the train would arrive at the station in another five to six minutes, Lin Sanjiu stood up and exercised her stiff limbs, which were numbed by the cold, preparing herself for the upcoming fight.

This time, the train drove into the train station soundlessly. When the train stopped, Lin Sanjiu wasn't even aware because she was doing some back twisting exercises. When she faced straight

again, she was so shocked that she took a step back and nearly fell.

The female teacher was now standing in front of the train door and was staring straight at her. The teacher's eyes narrowed into two crescents and her smile was much, much... wider. The students stood very close behind her. All of them had the same smiling expression as they pressed their faces against the train doors. The gates of Mausoleum Elementary School were right behind them. The teacher and the students crowded the narrow gap between the doors of the train and the gates of the school. That is to say, they only had to take one step to enter the train carriage.

However, they did not enter the train. They simply stood outside quietly, without making a single sound. Lin Sanjiu found herself standing face-to-face with the female teacher. A weakness assaulted her and her body grew cold. For a few seconds, she couldn't even make herself move.

In the end, the female teacher did not move either. She merely fixed her gaze on Lin Sanjiu and maintained her smile. The female teacher shook her own head slowly. Though her head moved, her eyes did not move in the same direction, instead, her pupils shifted in the opposite direction, till they were deep in the corners of her eyes. Her eyes never left Lin Sanjiu for even a second.

[What did she want to say? No. No... The question should be, can humans do something like that?]

"What are you—" this question was stuck in her throat. She thought she had already shouted, but she realized that she was scared that she couldn't make a sound. She almost forgot that she was wearing her Pygmalion Choker. It took a few seconds before she came to her senses again. She retreated to the other end of the train carriage and took out her [Tape Recorder]. Just then, the door beeped twice. The sound pierced through the stale atmosphere.

Lin Sanjiu didn't notice how nice it sounded before. She was

covered in cold sweat and she felt as if she had barely escaped a certain death. She watched as the train doors shut and brushed past the female teacher's nose.

The latter's expression grew cold in a split second, almost as if she wasn't smiling before. The smiles on the children's faces had also evaporated. They stared at Lin Sanjiu with creepy eyes, as if they were staring at a dead person. Next, they all shook their heads in a uniform manner.

Even a few minutes after the train had left the station, Lin Sanjiu couldn't erase the image of the mole on the female teacher's face while that woman shook her head.

Nothing life-threatening happened, but her heart was racing. The feeling lasted for a long time, and she only regained a little of her composure when she noticed the sparse surroundings around her. This time, the train traveled for a long time but did not enter any tunnel. Lin Sanjiu didn't know when she sat down on the floor of the train. She exhaled a long breath and decided not to get up. She stretched her neck and looked at the route map.

Finally, the next stop wasn't Mausoleum Elementary Station. "Bamboo Grove Mountains Station..." she mumbled its name. The name of the station was considered normal but, at this moment, Lin Sanjiu's nerves were tightly strung, and she hesitated before mumbling, "I think I better take a look at the situation before deciding if I should get off."

[The strange group of children with their teacher was standing directly outside the train, but none of them stepped into the train—because they couldn't enter? Does this mean that this train carriage has the ability to protect me? If that were the case, it would explain why someone would leave a note advising others not to alight...] Lin Sanjiu's body felt limp. She lowered her head exhaustedly and let out a sigh. She could see the bottom of her previous seat from where she was right now.

Lin Sanjiu looked over and she froze.

Under the seat, she saw an emotionless face staring at her, and who knows how long it had been lying there!

Finally, Lin Sanjiu couldn't control herself, letting out a cry and jumping up. She quickly took out her Vibroblade and held it tight. Yet, two seconds after she leaped up, Lin Sanjiu suddenly felt that something was wrong. Her brows knitted ever so slightly. She took two quick steps forward and bent down to look under the seat.

There was no one under the train seat.

It wasn't an illusion—she did see a face just now, but it was a face printed on a newspaper.

"Huh. Why did I find this just now?" The newspaper seemed to have slipped from the crevice between the seat. Dangling from the crevice, it revealed a large headshot of a person on its front page. Due to the lighting under the seat, Lin Sanjiu mistook that photo for a person staring at her and that really scared her.

Lin Sanjiu stretched her arm under the seat and grabbed the newspaper. There was a missing part on the top-right corner of the front page. Lin Sanjiu swiftly unfolded the piece of crumpled note and tried to fit it in the missing spot. It fitted, both its texture and the shape of its torn edge.

[The person who wrote the note must have torn a corner of the newspaper and scribbled that warning before squishing it into the crevice. But... if the person planned to warn the future passengers of the train, why didn't she write a bigger warning and place the newspaper out in the open? Wouldn't that be more eye-catching?]

Lin Sanjiu thought about these perplexing questions for some time but couldn't make sense of it. She flipped the newspaper, hoping to find clues about this weird world. When she reached the next section of the newspaper, her body froze.

Someone had obviously written a few words with very large

characters.

"NO, I WAS WRONG. GET DOWN"

The 'n' was dragged to the edge of the paper before it was abruptly chopped off.

Chapter 183: Bamboo Grove Mountains

Get down... what?

Lin Sanjiu stared vacantly at the newspaper in her hands, unable to recover from her shock even after some time.

"Please tell me it's not what I suspect." She felt drained. She plopped down on the seat and uttered quietly to herself, "Didn't this train protect me from those group of children and that teacher?"

But, she wasn't sure. After all, this world was really too strange. Lin Sanjiu wasn't even sure what sort of apocalyptic world it was. "I think I heard the name of this world somewhere..." Lin Sanjiu frowned, but she couldn't recall where she heard that name before even after thinking about it for a long time. At wit's end, she mumbled, "Should I use my Consciousness Mimicry?"

"Maybe, Nuwa could understand this world in a split second."

With this thought, she realized that that ability was indeed quite an incredible cheat.

"No, no." Mrs. Manas' voice suddenly sounded in her head without any warning. Lin Sanjiu was already high-strung, so when she suddenly heard that voice the silent train carriage, she leaped up in fright. "Lin Sanjiu, you don't have sufficient higher consciousness now to imitate Nuwa's thought process."

Lin Sanjiu didn't know she could feel this fortunate just being able to speak to someone...

Even if Mrs. Manas wasn't a real person or a normal one, Lin Sanjiu felt comforted. Cherishing every word Mrs. Manas said, Lin Sanjiu asked needily, "Why is it insufficient? I managed to activate it previously. Can my higher consciousness get lesser and lesser? And, what happened in the classroom that time?"

Mrs. Manas hemmed and hawed for some time and avoided

answering her questions, "Well, even though your situation is very strange, there are matters I have to settle using your higher consciousness... Anyway, if you activate your ability and imitate Nuwa, you would enter a comatose state after using it for a few seconds."

Lin Sanjiu instantly gave up on that idea. There was no way she could allow herself to lose consciousness in this strange place. She wanted to talk more to Mrs. Manas. She wanted that teacher to explain everything to her properly. Sadly, she found that her mindscape was now empty. No one answered her.

Once again, she found herself enveloped by loneliness. After she evolved, and after that experience with Nuwa and those 'Neuhumes', she rarely felt this emotional.

Before she met up with B.Rabbit and his gang, there were days when she felt so calm and rational that even she thought that it was abnormal.

Yet, this was one of those rare occasions where she felt very jittery. The extraordinary calmness that she once displayed had disappeared without a trace during her time here, but Lin Sanjiu missed it. If she could just calm herself down, if she wasn't so high-strung, she would have thought up of a strategy to deal with this a long time ago.

The tear on the green cover of the seat made it uncomfortable for her to sit. The train carriage was very quiet and empty—but this felt like an illusion, as if someone had purposely held his or her breath to create this false sense of "peace".

Unfortunately, there was no one around, except Lin Sanjiu.

She was a little scared and anxious. On top of that, she was also troubled by the large warning written on the newspaper. She decided to flip through the newspaper so that she could make some noise to create a slightly livelier atmosphere in the train. The picture which scared her belonged to a 'Tenebraelologist'—this was

obviously a word only used in this world.

To calm herself, Lin Sanjiu compulsively forced herself to ignore that warning and started reading the article. Thankfully, the newspaper was also in Chinese. Even though she was unfamiliar with some words and sentences, she got the main gist of it. It turned out that this Tenebraelologist called Le Bon had a great reputation and received many accolades internationally in the past. That was until he published a paper which shocked the whole world and created mass hysteria for some time.

However, even after a few years, Le Bon's prediction did not come true. Other tenebraelologists stood out to question his theory. In the end, he became a joke. The angry mob destroyed his house, and he was fired from work. When the forty-plus-year-old Le Bon appeared on the television again, he looked like a slightly deranged old man. Even this article which featured an exclusive interview with him was written with the intention to mock him. The article ended with the famous line he uttered on tv that scared everyone.

"The dark matter invasion will occur. It is just a matter of time. When the world ends, I will only rescue my believers!"

The words on the newspaper were very clear and the newspaper had not even turned yellow. Lin Sanjiu closed the newspaper and sighed. The apocalyptic event had already descended upon this world, and that Le Bon was probably right. Lin Sanjiu wondered if he was really still alive somewhere in this world...

"But, what did he mean by 'dark matter invasion'? "

Lin Sanjiu had never even heard of the many terminologies used in the article. Naturally, she couldn't fully understand the article. After putting down the newspaper, there were still many unanswered questions in her head, but she felt a little less anxious.

The train continued traveling with the same familiar sounds as it ran on the tracks. It swept past the scenery of the city and the residential buildings... Other than the fact that no one was around,

everything seemed very normal. Gradually, there were fewer and fewer buildings around. Lin Sanjiu spent two uneventful hours on the train before it finally arrived at Bamboo Grove Mountains Station.

After the train doors opened, Lin Sanjiu stood at the side of the doors and looked outside. Her heart quickly fell back to its normal pace. There weren't any buildings near the station and there weren't any people with weird expressions... The train station was clean. There were a few stalls selling souvenirs and snacks. Looking through the glass walls of the train station, she could vaguely see a mountain in the distance.

Apart from the odd silence, and the fact that no one was around, the train station seemed to be a normal station at a sightseeing location. After thinking for some time, Lin Sanjiu finally stepped out of the carriage and onto the platform. The reason why she alighted wasn't due to the warning on the paper—those words were too contradictory and came with no explanation so she couldn't rely her judgement over her situation based on that information. To Lin Sanjiu, staying on the train wasn't a long-term plan. Additionally, she had enough of the cold and wanted to look for a winter coat as soon as possible.

Lin Sanjiu couldn't help feeling uneasy as she turned back to look at the train carriage behind her. After all, the train provided her some protection previously and it was certainly difficult for her to leave that safe spot.

"I hope I made the right decision."

There was no way an empty train could respond to her. The train doors closed and the train rumbled off into the distance after a whistle. She was left alone on the platform. She looked around and easily spotted the exit. It led to a road outside, so Lin Sanjiu wasn't worried that she couldn't get out. Unfortunately, it was unbearably cold outside. She quickly ran to the stall near the exit and grabbed a few vests with the words 'Bamboo Grove Mountains' and wore a

few of them on her body. However, that didn't really warm her. They were too thin and her arms were still exposed to the frigid wind. Lin Sanjiu shivered uncontrollably as she wrapped up the food and beverages she found in the stall and converted them into a card. Then, she ran out of the train station. The scenic landscape waited for her silently.

Chapter 184: Why You Shouldn't Trespass onto Private Property

During winter, would you feel scared when you had to put on a sweater?

The short moment when you put that thick sweater over your head and before you could push your head out of the collar, you would see nothing except the dark outlines of the sweater. That would mean that you wouldn't notice if someone was standing beside you.

Lin Sanjiu never imagined that she would feel so scared when she was putting on the sweater. Twenty minutes earlier, she had just alighted from the train...

—

From the public square where the train station was situated, Lin Sanjiu could see a mountain some distance away. As it was behind a white mist, Lin Sanjiu could make out the greenish outline of that mountain. The station was quite some distance away from Bamboo Grove Mountains. This tourist attraction supported many small businesses. Outside the station, there were many haphazardly parked motorbikes. Some of the convenience stores and kiosks with half-opened doors had been ransacked. There weren't many items left behind. A few conspicuous new hotels were built right beside some old, short residential buildings. This appeared to be a very ordinary neighborhood in the small city.

The spooky incident at Mausoleum Elementary School left an extremely deep impression on her. She walked around the public square cautiously and finally heaved a sigh of relief after checking that no one was around. After she relaxed a little, she became more aware of the cold. It was so cold that her skin was starting to hurt.

"I need to look for some clothes as soon as possible, I can't even

think straight in this cold." Lin Sanjiu grumbled to herself softly. She rubbed her arms non-stop. The orange-red vests were made of a poor-quality material, being thin and permeable. It was a sort of material that would feel cold in winter and warm in summer. While she thought about this, she chose a random building and ran into it.

That was an old red brick building and there was even a large metal door. However, to a posthuman, that metal door was no different from a plastic one. After Lin Sanjiu activated her [Mosaic Censorship] a few times and blasted through a few doors, she found herself in someone's home.

The floor tiles had turned yellow with age; the rooms were small; a few clotheslines were randomly tied throughout the living room. This was more than proof that this was not a well-off family. There were clean clothes on the clothesline that were already dry. Lin Sanjiu did not expect to find what she wanted this quickly when she first stepped into this apartment. However, when she looked at the clothes carefully, she was immediately disappointed.

"This family washed their summer clothes?" Lin Sanjiu questioned herself, feeling puzzled. There were only singlets and short, there wasn't even a single shirt which could keep her warm. She looked around and found it so dirty and messy that she had no interest in going into the bedrooms to look for other clothes. She turned and walked to the neighbor's apartment. Similarly, she destroyed the lock on the door with a few attacks. The fragments of the lock fell to the ground noisily, and that sound echoed through the entire building for a long time. Without a lock, the door creaked open.

This apartment was much cleaner and more comfortable. At least, clothes were strewn all around. Once she stepped in, she sprinted to the bedroom and found two large closets like she expected. One of them held the owners' summer clothes, while the other stored the owners' winter clothes. They were kept neatly but

Lin Sanjiu soon sighed.

She looked at many sets of clothes and realized that they were all old people's clothes. There were male and female clothes in the closet. Not only were the clothes too big for her, but the thickest coats also had large red and green peonies prints—evidently, an old couple must have lived here in the past.

As a woman who once had quite a good fashion sense, Lin Sanjiu really wasn't keen on wearing them. However, her arms which were exposed to the cold wind were going numb soon...

"Forget it. It's okay." She made her mind up and took the vests. "Being warm is the most important thing. I will just change out of these if I see other clothes." She wanted to convert a few more clothes into cards but quickly decided against that idea. After searching for some time, she finally found a normal-looking black sweater. She stuffed her arms impatiently into the sweater and decided to quickly put the sweater over her head.

When she looked down, preparing to pull the sweater over her head, she caught a glimpse of a pair of feet in a pair of old cloth shoes. The tips of the old cloth shoes were directly in front of her Timberland boots.

Right now, there was a person standing in front of her—

Lin Sanjiu's arms were caught in the sleeves of the sweater. Her upper body was in a defenseless position. She wanted to scream, but she couldn't make a sound. She quickly retreated backward and pulled her arms apart. The black sweater was ripped in two. Lin Sanjiu regained an unobstructed view of her surroundings. She froze on the spot, then knitted her brows. There was no one else in the room. A pair of green cloth shoes was on the floor—but she didn't remember it being there before, when she entered the room.

She really hated this feeling.

"What the hell is wrong with this world," she had been here less

than a day and the number of shocks she received was almost comparable to the total number she accumulated over the previous two worlds, "Even though there is no one here, why is it so eerie..."

Even the courage she gained from her many close shaves with death wasn't quite enough to calm herself. She grabbed the thickest jacket and wrapped it around her conveniently before she subconsciously avoided the pair of old cloth shoes and rushed towards the main door.

When she reached the main door, she paused. This apartment belonged to an old couple, so naturally, they had some old items. Lin Sanjiu spotted a simple Chinese almanac calendar which Lin Sanjiu hadn't see people using for a long time. The old couple probably tore off a page of that calendar every day, leaving a thick stack of torn pages.

This was nothing special, but Lin Sanjiu couldn't help noticing something. The first remaining page of the calendar stated, "30 May, Saturday."

She touched the page of the paper and found that the dust on it wasn't that thick. At most, only a month had passed from that date.

"It's summer?" Lin Sanjiu looked down at the thick flowery cotton-padded jacket on her body.

It wasn't unusual that the climate of an apocalyptic world would change. However, everything in this world seemed normal, aside from that incident at Mausoleum Elementary School, and this temperature could never be the cause of the apocalyptic event. Lin Sanjiu couldn't think of a reason why the temperature would suddenly drop.

Lin Sanjiu didn't want to stay in this apartment another second longer. A suspicion flashed through her mind. Then, she ran back to the passageway and left the residential building through the metal door. Even though it was foggy outside, the soft sunlight

outside comforted her.

"I think I should find a safe shelter to stay right now," she said to herself encouragingly. "Fourteen months would pass very quickly..." Lin Sanjiu, sporting a flowery jacket, stood on the spot thinking for some time and headed toward the hotels. The green cloth shoes in the room had changed their direction at some unknown time and were now facing the door.

Chapter 185: Not Alone, Finally

"That's right. No matter how strange this world is, this is an apocalyptic world. Thus, it must come with two distinctive things: posthumans and duoluozhong." Lin Sanjiu thought to herself as she looked at the thing in front of her, which was only half her height.

She saw no one on her way here, so she didn't expect to meet a duoluozhong when she walked on the second floor of this bed and breakfast hotel.

The duoluozhongs from every world had a different appearance due to the different apocalyptic events that triggered their mutation. Logically speaking, Lin Sanjiu did not know what caused the apocalypse in this world, so she didn't know what sort of duoluozhong to expect. However, the thing in front of her was clearly a duoluozhong. It couldn't be anything else...

Its body was like a twisted trunk of a tree. Its head was sharp and flat. Its sharp jagged teeth stuck out from its mouth. Lin Sanjiu could see its non-human skeletal frame jutting and bulging under its greenish skin. This was a creature which could be called a 'monster' no matter where.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know why but she let out a sigh of relief after she saw the duoluozhong. When she regained her nerves, she drew out her vibroblade, and her expression even relaxed a little.

"This is how things should be..." Lin Sanjiu held her knife and stepped forward. Seeing this familiar creature, it didn't matter whether it was friend or foe, Kisaragi Station World didn't feel as inexplicable and creepy as before. It was as if she finally gained some confidence.

To her surprise, the duoluozhong let out a sharp shriek when it saw her taking out her knife. It turned and ran toward a room on the corridor and started knocking on the door.

Huh?

Lin Sanjiu stopped and stared at it while she held her knife. The handle of the door moved and the duoluozhong instantly squeezed through the gap in the door. Next, a man's puzzled face peeked out from the door. "Greenie, what's outside—?"

Before he could finish his sentence, he found himself staring back at Lin Sanjiu. At that moment, both people were shocked.

"Huh, huh?" Suddenly spotting another living person, Lin Sanjiu was overwhelmed with joy. Her eyes brightened as she asked, "Are you a posthuman?"

She could never imagine that seeing another human would make her so happy. The man seemed to feel the same way. He stuttered happily for some time before he finally completed his sentence, "I... I'm not imagining this, right? Are you alive? Oh gosh! I have been here for more than one month..."

While he spoke, he rubbed his short buzzcut and his round face turned red.

"I just arrived! This place gives me the creeps..." That person was just a stranger, but Lin Sanjiu couldn't resist telling him what was on her mind. Remembering something, she quickly asked, "That thing... is a duoluozhong?"

"Quick, come in..." the excited man urged. He wasn't that tall but he was well-built. Suddenly remembering that Lin Sanjiu was a female posthuman all by herself, he guessed that she might be cautious about entering his room, so he laughed hurriedly, "You mean Greenie? It is a duoluozhong. But it is just a... something in this world. I have some methods to tame any duoluozhong in any world so that I can use them."

Even though both of them didn't know each other, they already expressed enough goodwill. Besides, the man even told her about his "method". Lin Sanjiu guessed that he must have been very

lonely after being alone for more than a month.

Lin Sanjiu nodded her head and told him her name. After the man recited her name a few times, he replied, "I am Douglas. Did you also board the train from Kisaragi Station?"

Lin Sanjiu had a lot to say on this topic. "Yes, this place is really weird. What sort of apocalyptic world is this? And, why isn't there any people around here?" She hesitated for a moment when she asked him these questions. In the end, she didn't mention the crazy-looking people at Mausoleum Elementary Station and the pair of old cloth shoes. She didn't feel much when she was alone, but now that she was in front of another posthuman she couldn't bring herself to admit that she had been scared by a pair of shoes.

Douglas touched his buzzcut that was so short that he almost looked bald. He threw a glance at her, and a slightly strange expression appeared on his face, "You've never heard of Kisaragi Station?"

Lin Sanjiu felt like she heard that name before but she just couldn't recall it. She shook her head.

"I don't know what it is like in your original world. In my hometown, there is a country called Japan. Kisaragi Station is a famous online urban legend. The story goes like this. A young woman took a night train and realized that she boarded the wrong train. She didn't know where the train was heading. When she alighted at Kisaragi Station, she realized that she was in the middle of the wilderness. She had no choice but to walk along the tracks...

"She had been walking for a while when she suddenly saw an elderly man with only one leg. Then, she heard the drums sounds from a ceremony... All this time, she had been chatting with her online friends on the forum and had been reporting what was happening. Everyone told her to leave the place quickly. In the end, the young woman wrote: 'I met a good person, he will drive me to another station.'/ 'He is driving up the mountain, and he is

not responding to my questions. I plan to run away.' After this, she never replied again."

Perhaps, Douglas noticed Lin Sanjiu's fearful expression, since he sighed and nodded. "You should have guessed it by now, right? This world is named after a horror story... I think this world is related to urban legends and that sort of thing."

"Huh? But when I was on the train..." Lin Sanjiu didn't really understand, and told Douglas about the article she read, "Actually, I think this world has been invaded by something called 'dark matter'."

Douglas opened his mouth and thought for a moment but gave up, "Cough! Who knows... Anyway, I just want to spend my 14 months here peacefully. I am contented as long as nothing bad happens."

"You have a point. " Lin Sanjiu agreed silently.

After seeing another living person, Lin Sanjiu felt that she had recovered. Her usually cool-headedness and confidence had returned. After talking with Douglas for some time, she even entered the room and took a look at Greenie.

Douglas occupied a room with a large king-sized bed. There were clothes and empty noodle bowls around the bed, showing that man's typical untidiness. When Greenie saw Lin Sanjiu, it quickly hid behind a curtain, failing to notice that its feet could still be seen.

"After I 'capture' them, their intelligence falls significantly..." Douglas explained while he tidied the bed and cleared the items on it. "Its intelligence is only comparable to a five-year-old child now."

With its lowered intelligence, Lin Sanjiu didn't feel as much hatred for the duoluozhong. Douglas led Lin Sanjiu to the reception downstairs to get a key. Then, they returned to the second floor and he opened the door to another room.

"You should rest. It must have been quite an experience out there, right?" Douglas looked gruff but was actually quite caring, "I will wake you up in the afternoon for lunch." After he said that, he closed the door and left.

"How long has it been since I slept on a normal bed?"

Furthermore, this room had been tidied just before the arrival of the apocalyptic event. It was clean, the bed sheets were neat and the blanket was soft... Lin Sanjiu exhaled deeply and jumped into the bed, planting her head on the soft pillow.

Even though she was almost engulfed by her exhaustion, she got up with a hazy struggle and took out her [Teru Teru Bozu Defense System]. She stood on a chair and hung it on the ceiling. Seeing it quietly hanging from the ceiling, Lin Sanjiu finally felt safe. She took off the flowery jacket and kicked off her boots. When she crawled under the blanket, she felt as if all her bones were celebrating. She wrapped herself in that soft blanket and quickly drifted off to sleep.

The curtains were drawn, and she did not switch on the lights, so it was dim even though it was still daytime. But, even if Lin Sanjiu was awake, she wouldn't detect anything. The Teru Teru Bozu hanging from the ceiling slowly turned its body and its marker-drawn eyes suddenly opened. It stared Lin Sanjiu, who was fast asleep, with its void-like eyes.

Chapter 186: A Steaming Chicken Fried Rice

"The weather seems to be getting colder."

Lin Sanjiu woke up from her sleep because she was too cold—she felt as if her bones were contracting and her blood had congealed. When she half-opened her eyes hazily, all the muscles on her body ached from shivering.

She got out from the blanket which still held a little heat and shivered as she wore that flowery jacket and wrapped it tightly around herself. As it was later in the day, the room she was sleeping in also became darker. She could only see the vague outlines of the furniture around her. It was quiet outside. She couldn't even hear a single sound. It was as though the world had forgotten this small hotel room.

Lin Sanjiu switched on the light and looked at her Teru Teru Bozu. Seeing that it was not reacting, she left the room and entered the corridor. Waking up alone in a dark and cold place, she longed for someone to talk to. Lin Sanjiu knocked on Douglas's door and called out, "Douglas, are you in? What time is it now?"

She called out for him and knocked on the door, yet she could only hear silence from the room. She waited for some time and called out again. Again, she heard nothing.

"Did he go out?"

Lin Sanjiu remembered the various oddities about this world and she started growing anxious. She twisted the doorknob and found that it was locked. She wiped her fingers together and some dust particles fell from them, it seemed like no one had touched that doorknob for some time.

She went down to the lobby and walked around, but she didn't see any sign of Douglas or Greenie.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know what happened during the apocalyptic

event. Half of the red carpet in the lobby had been flipped open. The couches meant for the customers to rest were strewn all about the lobby messily. There was a thick layer of dust all over the tables and the desk at the reception area. This place had obviously been abandoned.

The day of the apocalypse must have arrived very sudden. There was a woman's clutch bag in the middle of the lobby, her foundation and lipstick were lying on the ground. There was a pair of male leather shoes under the reception desk, but the owner of the shoes was nowhere to be seen.

There was no sign of any living being, nor any human activity.

It was dusky and desolated outside. Lin Sanjiu could feel her confidence wavering just by being in this environment. " Did I really meet a man called Douglas? Was that just a dream I had because I was too tired?"

Doubtful thoughts, which she usually wouldn't have, started forming stealthily in her head. Lin Sanjiu sat down heavily on one of the couches. A layer of dust stirred as she sat there in a daze. She frowned and thought for some time but she discovered that she couldn't prove that she had really met Douglas

Even though the story about Kisaragi Station was in her head, that didn't mean much since she had heard that story before and just forgotten about it momentarily. Just when she was truly about to doubt herself and plan to go upstairs to check, she heard grumbling voice outside, not far from her: "Why do the people here throw their shoes everywhere?"

"Thud." That sounded like someone kicking something hard.

"Douglas!" Lin Sanjiu eyes brightened. The white fog which clouded her mind and her vague fears evaporated in a second. She leaped up and greeted him, "You're back!"

The man with a round face and head was carrying a large plastic

bag. When he saw her in the lobby, he was a bit surprised, "You're awake? Did you wait here for me?"

Lin Sanjiu instantly felt a little embarrassed. "Well, not really... It was just that you weren't back..." Lin Sanjiu didn't know what she mumbled but she quickly changed the topic, "That's a lot of food. Where did you find it?"

Her lips were so cold that they had turned purple, so she was wondering if she should eat now to get some calories to burn. "Yeah, I've eaten everything in this hotel. I found these food items from the residential buildings nearby. In any case, there is food in this world and it isn't dangerous, so I think it is pretty good." Douglas was happy when he talked about this. He rolled up his short sleeve and showed Lin Sanjiu what he collected, "Look. I have rice, noodles, luncheon meat... I can even use the fire in the back kitchen. There are all sorts of seasoning and spices there."

This wasn't the best part of it. As the water and electricity were still running normally, there were a few pieces of hard, frozen chicken breasts in Douglas's plastic bag. Lin Sanjiu, who couldn't even remember the last time she ate a warm bowl of rice and a plate of hot dish, could feel her stomach growling.

She clapped with her stiff cold hands, "Let's cook! It would also be a good way to warm up..."

"Aye." Douglas replied and headed to the back kitchen with his plastic bag. While he walked he laughed, "I feel alright. When I first arrived here, it felt really cold. But right now, I think I have adapted to it..."

Both of them were feeling high-spirited. Douglas even joked about the flowery cotton-padded jacket that Lin Sanjiu was wearing. They soon reached the back kitchen. As they worked individually, Douglas realized that his cooking skills were way stronger than Lin Sanjiu's. In the end, he got her to wait by the side. He used the chicken, luncheon meat and some chopped

onions and cooked up a plate of fried rice with chicken which he quickly placed in front of her.

White steam rose from the rice which had a sheen of oil. The fragrance which wafted into her nose was extremely tantalizing. Lin Sanjiu immediately ate a mouthful. Once she swallowed that mouthful of warm rice, it suddenly changed into a bone-chilling coldness which spread through her body. She felt as though even her organs were frozen. Her face turned green. She couldn't move her body for some time. It took a while before she felt her heart struggling to beat despite the cold. It pumped for a few times and she felt a slight warmth. Lin Sanjiu's fingers trembled, she was in disbelief when she touched the bowl which was still a little warm.

She looked up and saw Douglas looking at her with his pair of small eyes.

"Why aren't you eating?"

"I..." Lin Sanjiu wanted to speak but her teeth chattered instead, because of the cold. The chattering prevented her from speaking. Even if she wasn't cold to the point she couldn't speak, she would have realized that something was wrong. Douglas's round face was red and lively though he ate the fried rice cooked from the same pan. As he ate too quickly, he was even sweating a little.

Lin Sanjiu knew without asking that he couldn't see the problem here. "I don't know why but I felt cold when I ate that rice," she forced herself to smile. She could even feel her blood slowing down and the blood vessels on the back of her hand had turned purple. "Did you experience the same situation before?"

Unexpectedly, Douglas nodded. "Yes, but it didn't last for long. At that time, I didn't have any food with me. If I didn't eat, I would starve to death. Even though I felt cold, I forced myself to eat... Somehow, I felt better after I finished eating. So go on, eat!"

"Is that so?"

Lin Sanjiu looked down at the bowl of rice without saying a word. She only brought two-days worth of food from Garden of Eden. If she wanted to survive here for 14 months, it was necessary for her to eat the food there. Lin Sanjiu felt very frightened when she delivered another spoonful of rice into her mouth.

Chapter 187: The Reason Behind Kisaragi Station's Formation

Lin Sanjiu felt worse after eating that meal. She couldn't finish that small bowl of rice because she was getting a headache from being too cold. She only ate a few mouthfuls and pushed the bowl to aside. Douglas didn't seem to mind. He poured her portion into his own bowl and gulped it down. This dispelled her slight suspicion toward him. Even though she watched from a side as Douglas cooked, and didn't see him doing anything weird with the food, seeing him eat her portion finally convinced her that it was alright. She even felt a little guilty for suspecting him.

After she stopped eating, her body gradually stopped trembling. Wearing a thick jacket did help a bit.

"You don't look that well. Do you want to rest more?" Douglas wiped his mouth and burped after he finished his food.

"No... I want to take a look around. Maybe, I will even meet a few survivors." Unfortunately, after she said that, she started shivering again. She jumped on the spot trying to generate more heat to keep her body warm.

"Okay," Douglas answered, and he didn't seem to mind. "I already searched a few times. There isn't anyone around. But you can go ahead, I am going back to my room to play some video games."

Supposedly, the first stop he saw when he was on the train wasn't Mausoleum Elementary Station. Instead, it was some Electronics Street. Since he was bored, Douglas filled a bag with all sorts of games, so he could spend his whole 14 months playing them.

Lin Sanjiu was quite impressed by his carefree attitude. She nodded and walked out of the hotel.

"Ah, wait!" the man suddenly called her from behind.

She saw him standing on the stairs leading to the second floor,

with half his face covered by the shadow.

"Don't go to the Bamboo Grove Mountains," he said sternly.

Lin Sanjiu questioned him but he only answered, "It is too far. It takes more than two days for you to go there and come back... If anything happens, I can't even find you."

That was true. If Bamboo Groves Mountains wasn't that far, there wouldn't be these hostels and hotels here. She agreed and thanked him before she walked out of the hotel. According to Douglas, she slept for only four to five hours, so it was now about two o'clock in the afternoon. However, the sky was dark and overcast. There wasn't a single glimpse of sunlight. It was as if she was seeing everything through a gray filter. It was more like the moment before a storm or evening time.

Even though Lin Sanjiu did not plan to go to the Bamboo Grove Mountains, she took the same path toward it. There were many shops at the sides of this street. Almost half the convenience stores, snack kiosks and souvenirs stalls must be on this street. As such, it retained some of its liveliness.

To keep herself warm, Lin Sanjiu exercised while she walked. She leaped and bounced along the road. Someone who didn't know better would definitely think that she was very happy if they saw her. After bouncing past two stalls which sold almost the same souvenirs, she stopped in front of a convenience store.

Standing on the street and looking in from its windows, Lin Sanjiu could see that the store has been ransacked, as there were only a few remaining items, lying in a mess. Things like tobacco, alcohol, food, and lighters had all been taken. Even the door to the staff room was opened. This destruction was probably left behind by the survivors who came before Douglas.

There was a life-sized standee of a beautiful air stewardess standing outside the convenience store. There was a bright smile on her oval face and the position of her eyes just happen to face the

train station. A crooked signboard in the shop read, "We help you book your tickets, rent your car and organize your trip." The words were still clear and readable. Apparently, the convenience store also provided services like a travel agency.

After looking around casually, Lin Sanjiu saw a row of items that were untouched. Lin Sanjiu's heart raced as she walked over. It was a magazine rack. The people who had focused all their attention on looking for survival supplies naturally weren't interested in newspapers or magazines. On the other hand, this was different from Lin Sanjiu. Ever since she read that article which featured that scientist, Le Bon, the words "dark matter" had been on her mind. She just couldn't get over it.

"Perhaps, I can find some relevant information from these newspapers or magazines..." She thought to herself and randomly threw the few of the entertainment magazines on the top-most shelf on the ground.

"Isn't there a newspaper around..." she grumbled. She threw all the useless magazines on the ground first. Information from a newspaper would be to-the-point and comprehensive, so that was the most ideal. Unfortunately, all the newspaper here were entertainment tabloids, which were not helpful at all.

Lin Sanjiu finally found a magazine at the very bottom of the entire shelf. Its front page was a little old. Compared to the magazines which were mostly the May and June issues, this magazine was from December of the previous year. Its name was "Science and Technology Frontier".

"No wonder they couldn't sell it even half a year later."

But this magazine was the very thing Lin Sanjiu needed. She flipped to the content page urgently and tried to search for topics regarding dark matter or Le Bon.

Surprisingly, she really found something on it.

Furthermore, she got more information that she expected. This magazine was published when Le Bon's theory was losing credence, therefore it devoted a large section describing Le Bon's published works with the objective of presenting criticism against it by other scholars. Even though there were still many terminologies specific to this world, and other jargons which Lin Sanjiu didn't know, she finally had a general idea.

In Lin Sanjiu's world, no one really knew what dark matter was. But, in this world, though it can't be seen, they have already found its composition and formation process after multiple experiments. The scientists here had even started researching about its uses. Despite being one of the leading researchers in this field, Le Bon announced that he had found an alarming characteristic of dark matter a few years before the apocalyptic event.

Dark matter was corrosive.

Furthermore, the corrosive nature of dark matter had only become active in the recent years. Before this, it seemed that it had been latent. Different materials reacted differently to high levels of dark matter exposure and displayed different speeds of corrosion. This process was very slow, but Le Bon asserted that the materials would all be assimilated, and 98% of the object would become dark matter.

Lin Sanjiu skipped the long paragraphs of complicated theoretical explanation and then looked up while she contemplated about the matter. Evidently, this world had been corroded by dark matter. In these few years, everything here had already been converted to dark matter.

"But, what is dark matter? What harm can it cause..."

Lin Sanjiu's gaze fell on the refrigerator which once held beverages. As she had been thinking hard, she was staring in a daze at her own blurred reflection that was on the refrigerator door.

While Lin Sanjiu contemplated, she suddenly froze. The hairs on

her back stood on end.

From the refrigerator door, she could see a vague human outline standing behind her. Lin Sanjiu turned around slowly and came face-to-face with the air stewardess' beautiful pair of eyes.

"Wasn't that thing at the front door just now?"

Chapter 188: Robbing A Video Game Shop

When Lin Sanjiu used her Vibroblade to cut through that human-shaped standee in a neurotic manner, she suddenly remembered a sentence that Douglas said.

"This world is named after a horror story..." I think this world is related to urban legends and that sort of thing."

The standee of the air stewardess had already lost any semblance of its human-shape. There were still bits and pieces of cardboard shreds, remnants of the cardboard standee, floating in the air. Lin Sanjiu took a few large gasps of air while she stored her Vibroblade with trembling fingers.

Her heart was pounding like mad and she tried her best to calm herself down.

"Look, it became shreds without even a bit of resistance. There is nothing scary about that thing—"

Lin Sanjiu repeated these words to herself repeatedly. However, there was no way she would continue in this store. Lin Sanjiu did not dare to look at the pile of shredded cardboard in front of her. She grabbed the Science and Technology Frontier tightly in her hand, went around the magazine shelf, then rushed out of the convenience store.

"Could dark matter bestow the ability to move upon non-living objects?"

Lin Sanjiu turned behind to look at the convenience store. It was still in the same wrecked, post-calamity state. It did not look dangerous at all. Her heart pounded again, and she no longer had the mood to explore. All she wanted was to return to the hotel, so she quickly sprinted back.

Even though Douglas wasn't a relative or friend, his presence was very comforting to Lin Sanjiu.

"Douglas!"

The corridor of the second floor was just the way she left it. It was dark and quiet, as if no one had ever been there before. For some unknown reasons, Lin Sanjiu suddenly remembered the thin layer of dust she felt when she touched the doorknob of Douglas's room. She couldn't help feeling a little panicky so she raised her voice and called out, "Douglas, come out!"

Another room by her left opened with a click. Light and sounds from a voice game instantly poured out from the same room. It was as if someone had revealed a different corner of the world. Douglas peeked out from the room looking puzzled, "What's up? Did something happen?"

Lin Sanjiu immediately let out a sigh of relief, laughing at herself inwardly.

"So, I knocked on the wrong door. Douglas's room is 205 but I tried to open the adjacent room, 207. That's why that doorknob is dusty."

"I found some information. Come and have a look, maybe we can figure out and make sense of the rules governing this world." Lin Sanjiu raised the magazine in her hand. Unexpectedly, another magazine slipped out and fell to the ground. She only realized then that she had accidentally rolled both magazines together when she escaped from that store.

Walking into Douglas's room, she placed both magazines on his table and flipped them open. The first-person shooter game on Douglas's television had been paused, and the image showed a gun aiming at a few zombies.

"Haven't you killed enough of those things in reality? How can you still find that fun?" Lin Sanjiu asked; she couldn't really understand Douglas's mentality toward the game. She pulled two chairs over to the table and sat down with him.

"You don't understand. The content of the game is rich, especially the inventory and the maps," Douglas replied offhandedly. He looked down and started reading the article that Lin Sanjiu showed to him. After some time, he clicked his tongue and looked up.

"Dark matter, or according to this article, dark energy, will corrode everything in this world..." He rubbed his chin. His stubble was almost as long as his hair. "This world is called Kisaragi Train Station... I say, do you think dark matter is what we usually call, erm, you know... the paranormal?"

This was actually Lin Sanjiu's first conjecture. However, this theory was too outrageous for her. As an atheist, it was difficult for her to imagine that an army of cosmic ghosts would come to this world and kill everyone here.

"They might not have been killed." Douglas didn't seem frightened at all. "Maybe, everyone in this world had become dark matter and they all drifted off into space."

"That's ridiculous!" Lin Sanjiu couldn't hold back her laughter. Being in this well-lit room, filled with an aura of vitality, and chatting for some time with a warm-hearted living person, Lin Sanjiu's previous fear and anxiety had all dissipated. "Have you... ever had any strange encounters?"

With a half-opened mouth, Douglas thought for a long time.

"Well, I think I dropped something when I was gathering video games. When I turned back, it disappeared. But, this sort of thing happens frequently in other worlds too. I don't really consider it a supernatural event?" He continued, and sounded rather carefree, "Other than that, I just eat, sleep and hit Dou Dou. It is a little boring, but it can't get better."

"There is the same joke in his world. " Lin Sanjiu instantly felt closer to him. She laughed out and felt more relaxed. Who knows, perhaps all those Feng Shui theories she heard in the past really

meant something here. Maybe, it was harder for dark matter to consume Douglas because he was male and had more 'Yang' energy. Lin Sanjiu thought that using Yin-Yang philosophy was appropriate for this explanation.

"Alright. In that case, I will go back to my room to rest and clean up. I will come over at night to hit Dou Dou too." She stood up and pointed to the zombie in the game, which they had both nicknamed Dou Dou.

"Okay! Don't forget your magazine. See you later at night."

Before Lin Sanjiu stepped out of his room, Douglas grabbed the game controller without wasting another second. People's greatest fears actually came from the unknown. After she discovered that the incidents were related to dark matter, she immediately didn't feel as tense as before. She took out her key and opened the door to her room. When she walked in, she found herself incidentally staring straight at the Teru Teru Bozu's pair of black eyes.

"That's right, I forgot that you were guarding this place," she said softly before turning on the lights. Everything in the room was normal. Lin Sanjiu felt cold and dirty so she couldn't wait to take a hot shower. After that chicken fried rice incident, Lin Sanjiu wrapped the jacket tighter around herself. She walked into the bathroom and turned on the shower to test the temperature. The water from the shower head was steaming hot. White steam quickly filled the entire bathroom.

Lin Sanjiu had not seen any taps after that time when she bathed in the large bathing pool belonging to one of the sponsors at Garden of Eden. She almost forgot the creepy strangeness of this world and felt a sense of gratitude. She found the hotel's toothbrush and towel and finally let out an 'oh' when she saw the mirror in the bathroom.

"I will just cover it with a blanket," Lin Sanjiu might not have experienced it firsthand, but she heard many ghost stories before.

"Mirrors seem inauspicious."

After she covered the mirror, this space did feel a lot... safer. Lin Sanjiu took off her boots. They fell with a heavy thud on the floor. Next, she needed to take off her clothes. This wasn't worth mentioning—if she could actually take off the cotton-padded jacket.

However, she realized the jacket wouldn't budge. She had already unzipped the jacket, but the jacket seemed to weigh a ton. It did not come off when Lin Sanjiu tried to pull it from her body, instead, it seemed to be shrinking and squeezing her. Lin Sanjiu's face quickly turned purple, she almost thought she heard her ribcage cracking.

Hot water continued pouring from the shower, and the steam grew thicker. Surrounded by a foggy mist, Lin Sanjiu soon became a struggling figure on the floor.

"What... what's wrong?" Mrs. Manas' anxious voice rang out in her mind. Right now, Lin Sanjiu needed all her energy just to keep herself breathing, so she couldn't respond at all. The jacket seemed to possess a malicious grudge with a determination to suffocate her to death. On contrary, Lin Sanjiu wasn't afraid of this open and direct attack. Even though she was very uncomfortable, her mind was still clear. She activated her [No coincidence. No story] and placed one hand on the exterior of the jacket and one on its interior. She then activated her [Mosaic Censorship].

With [No coincidence. No story] improving her luck slightly, she did not blast her own abdomen into pieces, unlike the flowery cotton-padded jacket.

The flowery jacket lost its grip once it was blasted into bits. It slid off her body revealing the singlet underneath. Lin Sanjiu collapsed on the floor, panting heavily. She felt that the warm steam was hampering her breathing.

"Even though I don't know what you're doing, and I know you

mean no harm," Lin Sanjiu shouted unhappily in her mind, "you should leave me with at least a bit of higher consciousness! I might need it to survive!"

Mrs. Manas had already found out what had happened from Lin Sanjiu's mindscape. Knowing that she was in the wrong, she didn't dare to bring up the issue about Lin Sanjiu disrespecting her. She replied with a vague utterance showing that she agreed with Lin Sanjiu.

After some time, she spoke with an almost fawning tone, "Well, you can use your higher consciousness to resist many types of attacks... It might be useful here. I will teach you this method now, alright?"

Lin Sanjiu scoffed when she heard her words and didn't reply—she was taking advantage of this opportunity to vent her anger.

After being nearly suffocated to death in the bathroom, she did not have the mood to bath anymore. She looked at the jacket on the floor and sat silently on the floor for some time. Suddenly, she realized something and quickly ran over to knock on the door of Room 207.

Hearing knocks on the door, Douglas went to open it. He was very astonished when he saw Lin Sanjiu standing with her wet hair and face.

"Slow down. Slow down. You mean, your jacket attacked you?" He was still holding his game controller, but his face was in disbelief.

"The scraps of cloth are still on the floor of the bathroom. You can go see if you don't believe me," Lin Sanjiu replied stiffly.

"I don't mean..."

"Anyway, I thought of something just now." Lin Sanjiu interrupted him, she didn't have the mood to listen to him, "The article did mention that all matter would be corroded by black

energy, right? This means that everything we are in contact with is actually dark matter... If your conjecture is right, doesn't it mean that everything here is dangerous? Just like my jacket!" Lin Sanjiu spoke hurriedly, as if she felt that this was an urgent matter.

"What you said sounds logical... but I hold a different perspective on this matter."

"What?"

"Look, I've lived here for more than a month. Basically, I didn't experience anything weird, much less anything life-threatening. If everything had the ability to attack me, how could I still be alive now? Hey, I am not doubting you... But if we explain this based on superstition, it would make perfect sense."

He found a dry towel and handed it to Lin Sanjiu for her to wipe her face, and continued, "The owner of the cotton-padded jacket must have already passed away; in any typical ghost story, that would mean that the jacket is probably 'possessed'. If you run around wearing a dead person's clothes, do you think you will be fine?!"

This was the first time Lin Sanjiu thought about this. After pausing for a moment, she found that what he said really made sense. In the past, she didn't have much interest in such stories, so, naturally, she wasn't familiar with the line of logic in such supernatural tales. She suddenly remembered the pair of old-fashioned cloth shoes and smiled bitterly. She held the towel tightly in her hands, "I guess the owner of every clothing in this world is dead... Do you want me to freeze to death?"

There wasn't a single clothing store on this street located in this tourist area.

Douglas didn't seem to think that it was a problem. He smiled and replied, "There weren't only electronic stores at that electronic street I went to, there were also many eateries and clothes stores... You could definitely find some clothes there."

"Do I have to take the train?"

"Anyway, I make my trips there with the train. If you want, you could walk there. It is not really that far." Douglas was very familiar with the location of that street. He took out a piece of paper and drew a simple map for her, "Right now, I am at a critical point in my game, so I won't accompany you. But, please remember to bring back some video games."

At that moment, Lin Sanjiu already calmed down significantly. She nodded and took the map from him. As Douglas had never encountered what she had been through, it wasn't surprising that he was indifferent to these matters. However, Lin Sanjiu knew that she had to take things seriously. She thanked him and left immediately.

A normal person would need at least two hours to complete the whole journey on foot, but it would only take a posthuman less than 20 minutes. On the way, she did not waste her time as she was learning about how she could use higher consciousness for defense and also the scope of its application. Putting it simply, a normal person's thoughts are merely thoughts. However, a user of higher consciousness could gather numerous higher consciousness imbued thoughts to materialize a mental projection or create an internal barrier. It also had many other uses. Legend has it that once a person reached the maximum level of higher consciousness, that user would be able to "make all his or her wishes come true", just like that Lunar New Year greeting.

However, with Lin Sanjiu current ability, she couldn't even protect herself from the cold so she had no choice but to look for a clothes store. The electronic street was not long but it was packed to the brim with many different shops and stalls. This had obviously been a very lively place before the apocalypse. Lin Sanjiu finally found a clothes store after covering half the street. She found a thick woolen overcoat and a down jacket. Following Mrs. Manas' suggestion, she even converted two long johns into cards.

"Now, I have to get some video games for Douglas..."

Lin Sanjiu pushed open the doors to the largest electronics store and suddenly realized that she didn't have to bring the games back to the hotel for him.

"Weren't you... back in the hotel playing video games?" She stared blankly in front of her, "Why did you come here earlier than me?"

The man standing behind the shelves turned his head the moment he heard the door opening. It was Douglas. "After you left, I got through that stage. That crappy game had a strong start but a weak ending," Douglas rubbed his head, appeared slightly embarrassed. "Thinking that you would be here, I decided to come over to have a look... Did I scare you?"

"Oh, not really..." Lin Sanjiu felt safer with a companion by her side and laughed, "Well, now you can choose your own games."

Douglas chuckled and added something along the lines of "Other worlds don't even have working electricity, I can finally satisfy my gaming addiction here." Then, he occupied himself once again by searching through the various games.

"The last time I played a video game was during my university years..." Right now, Lin Sanjiu felt a little out of place just seeing the racks filled with various game series. The store was very large and it not only had video games but also sold many different game consoles, gaming headsets, DVDs and other related merchandise. As she didn't have much to do, she looked around the store casually.

She had only walked for a few minutes when she heard Mrs. Manas calling her from her mindscape. Mrs. Manas' voice sounded a little shaky, "Student Lin-Lin.."

She sounded like she was afraid of something. Lin Sanjiu tensed up. She was just about to ask Mrs. Manas about that reaction when

a person looked up from a shelf far from her. That was Douglas. He looked at her with a doubtful face and asked, "Did you hear that? I think I heard a voice calling a student?"

Chapter 189: The Something Mrs. Manas Sensed

Lin Sanjiu spent a considerable amount of effort hiding her shock, so when she looked at Douglas, she had a serene expression. "No, I didn't hear anything." She even acted in concert with her answer and looked around. Apparently, Douglas couldn't hear her thoughts because at that moment Lin Sanjiu was shouting repetitively in her mind — for Mrs. Manas to shut up and stay quiet for the meantime—but Douglas didn't show any reaction.

Douglas scanned his surroundings suspiciously before he slowly looked away.

"Maybe, to him, it isn't a great deal hearing a random woman's voice in this strange, incomprehensible world..." Lin Sanjiu acted nonchalantly and casually picked up a helmet-like product. She stared hard at the packaging but she had no idea what was written on it.

"Why can Douglas hear Mrs. Manas' voice? Mrs. Manas is just a manifestation of [School of Higher Consciousness], she is just a self-aware entity created from higher consciousness. Could this be related to his abilities?"

As both of them just got acquainted, they didn't reveal their active abilities to each other. Even if Lin Sanjiu wanted to ask Mrs. Manas about her odd reaction, she couldn't do it now. Lin Sanjiu had no choice but to wait, against her impatient nature, for Douglas to gather all the game discs he had chosen before both of them started walking back to the hotel.

It was a dark afternoon, and the buildings around them silently watched as the two people walked through the street. Other than being quiet and uninhabited, there was nothing unusual about the world around them. They did not chat much along the way. After their sparse exchange of words, they could only hear their own

mundane footsteps.

Although she had not been in this world for a long time, Lin Sanjiu had walked for quite some distance. However, other than that eccentric group of students and their teacher, Douglas was the only other posthuman she met.

"Where are all the other people?"

When they returned to the hotel, the sky was so dark that it almost seemed as though it was already nighttime. Under that darkness, the facades of the buildings faded into mere outlines. The world fell into a lifeless, dark silence. Looking up and noticing that the light from her room was still on, Lin Sanjiu sighed in relief and felt slightly safer for no particular reason.

She wrapped the down jacket tighter around herself, but it felt as if the frigid wind was still breezing through the material. She was so cold that her skin hurt.

The somewhat awkward journey, caused by their lacking conversation, finally ended at the front doors of the hotel. Lin Sanjiu couldn't wait to rush to her room to chat with Mrs. Manas, but Douglas called her with a surprised look, "Didn't you say you wanted to play some video games together? I specifically chose some popular fighting games, and I even grabbed a controller for you!"

Lin Sanjiu had forgotten all about that. "Oh," she answered. Even though she wanted to find an excuse, she didn't have the heart to disappoint Douglas after she saw his eyes filled with expectation. "Okay, wait for me. I just want to go back to my room for a while."

Douglas agreed cheerfully and added, "I'll wait for you in my room." Then, he left and headed back to his room.

Something felt wrong but Lin Sanjiu couldn't put her finger on it.

"In any case, I need to call Mrs. Manas as soon as possible..." This was the only thought which engulfed her mind. Once Douglas left,

she opened the door to her own room. She switched on the light, illuminating the pitch black room. The Teru Teru Bozu on the ceiling turned slowly to face her.

"Mrs. Manas, quick! Come out!" she shouted in her mind, "He isn't nearby."

Lin Sanjiu called a few times and finally heard her faltering voice, "Student... Li-Lin..."

If two speakers had the ability to swallow their own saliva, Lin Sanjiu was sure that Mrs. Manas gulped before plucking up her courage to speak.

"How can you feel frightened if you're just an entity created from my higher consciousness?" Lin Sanjiu tried her best to maintain a relaxed tone, even though her heart suddenly skipped a beat.

There was a short moment of silence in her mind before Mrs. Manas slowly spoke again.

"I'm scared... because you're scared." Lin Sanjiu was stunned.

"What happened?" she asked softly before heading to the side of the bed.

Mrs. Manas was an entity created by her subconsciousness so she might have noticed something Lin Sanjiu missed... and her guess was right.

"Don't, don't walk further into the room!" Mrs. Manas yelled out urgently from her mind. Lin Sanjiu was shocked. Before she could ask what was wrong, her gaze shifted and she froze on the spot.

There was a pair of old cloth shoes at the side of her bed, laying there neatly, and the tip of the shoes pointed towards the pillows.

"Quick! Hurry! Get out of this room," Mrs. Manas sounded anxious and panicky, even stammering. "You idiot. Didn't you realize that the room was dark when you walked in?!"

Lin Sanjiu was terrified. She turned and raced for the door. She

pulled open the door in one smooth movement and ran out to the corridor. She did not close the door behind her properly, so it opened with a click behind her, revealing the dark crack between the door and its frame—the light had somehow been switched off again.

"I can't... This place isn't safe anymore." She took a few rapid gasps of air, barely hearing what Mrs. Manas was saying. She rushed to Douglas's room and was just about to knock on the door.

Just as she raised her hand, she finally understood what felt wrong.

Douglas entered room 205. That dust-filled room, which had not been used for a long time, whose door had been locked.

It was only then that Lin Sanjiu could suddenly hear Mrs. Manas' alarmed and furious words, "Did you hear me? I want you to get out of this hotel!"

Before her brain could even respond to the events, Lin Sanjiu's body already reacted first. Her whole body felt freezing cold. Her footsteps echoed as she ran down the stairs and sprinted out of the front door without stopping.

After Lin Sanjiu got out of the hotel, Mrs. Manas edgy voice relaxed a little, but she was still angry and scared. "Are you an idiot! You clearly caught a glimpse that something was amiss yet your conscious mind didn't register anything at all, you had to look for me in your subconscious to realize that something was off—"

As Mrs. Manas said this, a few images appeared in her mind, beyond her own volition.

This was another function of her high consciousness, but she didn't have the mood to think about that now.

The images showed the situation back at the electronics store. After browsing two shelves unhurriedly, she incidentally spotted a backroom of the store. The door was ajar, and Lin Sanjiu could see

through the door crack that it was dark inside. Somehow, the room made her feel uneasy so she retreated backward and avoided it.

Through that crack, Douglas's eyes stared straight ahead. His face was contorted and his skin was hard, as he had died quite some time ago.

Apparently, the thing he lost in the store was actually his own body.

Chapter 190: Don't Go to Bamboo Grove Mountains Scenic Site (1)

In retrospect, Lin Sanjiu realized how naive she was for thinking that she could go against this world just because she destroyed a human-sized cardboard standee. Lin Sanjiu lowered her head silently; her jacket was useless against the cold, so she would try her best to endure.

At that moment, someone opened and peeked out from the window of the second floor. The person fixed his emotionless eyes on Lin Sanjiu, with his lips curled and a wide smile, "Where are you going? Don't you want to play some video games?"

That window was neither from room 205 nor room 207—it was Lin Sanjiu's room. The Teru Teru Bozu was still hanging from the ceiling. Looking up, Lin Sanjiu could only see a black outline of it, slowly spinning above Douglas's head. There wasn't a glimmer of light in Douglas's eyes. Apart from his stiff, perfect smile, his face was like that of a mannequin; he stretched his neck out of the window.

Right now, he looked just like those students and their teacher at Mausoleum Elementary Station.

"Why didn't I realize this before?"

Now that she thought carefully about it, that perfect wide smile that almost reached his ears had been plastered on his face for almost the whole day. "Isn't that very abnormal?"

"Why are you standing here stupidly, run!" Mrs. Manas' fierce voice rang out in her mind. When Douglas raised his slightly puzzled eyes, Lin Sanjiu couldn't stand it any longer. She turned and ran. Her surroundings were dark, and she was too flustered to consider her route, as she couldn't see clearly. The only thing on her mind was to run away from the hotel. Unfortunately, her body

had stiffened from the cold and was not cooperating. After running for less than ten minutes, she felt her lungs burning and she had difficulties breathing.

"Where-where did I run to?"

There was a death-like silence behind her. No human or object was chasing behind her. But, of course, the lights from the hotel far away had already been switched off. Lin Sanjiu held her knees, bending over, panting. All her rigid limbs were numbed by the cold, and she felt as if her athleticism had returned to the level before she evolved.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know when she was surrounded by patches of forest. Even though they were clearly a design feature of this city, she didn't see any streetlamps around. Through her intense gasps of air and tightly-strung nerves, she turned to look behind. Luckily, the cold didn't affect her eyesight. She peered straight into the darkness and suddenly jumped up; she was speechless.

At the side of this road, not far behind her, there was a convenience store...

And at the entrance of the convenience store stood a cardboard standee of a beautiful air stewardess.

Unlike the previous time, the air stewardess wasn't looking in the direction of the train station. The air stewardess's eyes seemed to be following Lin Sanjiu. Right then, Lin Sanjiu turned over to face the standee straight on. The air stewardess's smile was just as beautiful before, revealing eight white teeth in the darkness.

Ignoring other matters, after seeing that the convenience store was behind her, she realized that she was now on the road leading to Bamboo Grove Mountains.

"Don't go to the Bamboo Grove Mountains."

Lin Sanjiu didn't know why, but she could still remember this particular sentence that Douglas said to her very clearly.

"This world is just too strange and incomprehensible. You should defend yourself with your higher consciousness," Mrs. Manas said weakly. Mrs. Manas logically knew what Lin Sanjiu was thinking about. Like a drowning person who had suddenly managed to grab on to a driftwood, Lin Sanjiu immediately followed what Mrs. Manas had taught her previously and activated her newly mastered skill, [Defence Forcefield].

"Every bit of your higher consciousness is required for your survival now, so I won't embezzle it from you right now." Mrs. Manas sounded extremely solemn, "my presence also uses up your higher consciousness. While you activate your [Defence Forcefield], I will temporarily disappear so that the forcefield will be stronger."

If Mrs. Manas disappeared, Lin Sanjiu knew that she would be all alone in the darkness. Lin Sanjiu nodded her head with some difficulty. When she didn't receive a reply even after a few seconds, she suddenly realized that Mrs. Manas already disappeared. She activated her [Defence Forcefield] wordlessly. As expected, a white light illuminated her whole body. It flashed for a few times and it quickly became dark again. Lin Sanjiu gritted her teeth and that white light appeared abruptly, only to fade into darkness even more quickly.

If Mrs. Manas had not vanished without a trace, she would certainly be sighing right now.

At its first stage, a properly activated [Defence Forcefield] would cover the user's skin with a faint light which others would not notice without scrutiny. Unfortunately, Lin Sanjiu was like a flickering defective lightbulb right now. This fully illustrated that she lacked practice in this aspect.

Lin Sanjiu had to control the 'flow' of her higher consciousness so that she could direct a steady stream of higher consciousness to maintain her Defence Forcefield. Meanwhile, Lin Sanjiu also had to move quickly as she did not dare to remain in one place for too

long. No matter how hard it was for her, Lin Sanjiu had no choice but to struggle on with each passing minute.

At this moment, Lin Sanjiu had problems even figuring out where to go next. Nowhere in this Kisaragi Station world seemed safe. Right now, Lin Sanjiu had her back against the direction of the hotel, and there was no way she was going to turn around—she had the feeling that if she turned around, she would find the cardboard standee creeping closer to her.

"Everywhere is the same to me, right?" She forced herself to calm down and tried to use her logic to analyze her current situation. "It seems to me that everything related to 'humans' is dangerous... so I might as well enter the mountains."

"At least, there are no human cardboard standees and no clothes that have been worn by the deceased..."

However, Lin Sanjiu had only walked a few minutes on this dark, dusky road when she discovered that her [Defence Forcefield] had a critical flaw. She smiled drily. This ability wasn't bad but the flaw stemmed from her poor proficiency at controlling her higher consciousness. Once she activated her ability, her whole body would flicker like a bad light bulb, sometimes the white light surrounding her would be far brighter than what it should be, and when it was dark, there would be totally no light.

Anyone who had used a mobile phone in the dark would understand this situation. Whenever one looked away from the edge of that bright screen, the room they were in would appear darker than usual.

This is especially true for Lin Sanjiu right now. With the flashing light, her eyes did not have sufficient time to adapt to the lighting of the environment which was constantly changing. Lin Sanjiu couldn't walk quickly as she had to be extra careful since she couldn't really see what was ahead of her. She walked in this manner for five minutes before she suddenly hit her own head.

She was on the verge of cursing herself.

How could she forget after activating her [Defence Forcefield] that she still had her [Ability Polishing Agent]!

Considering that she would soon have some light around, Lin Sanjiu heaved a sigh of relief and took out her [Ability Polishing Agent]. At the same time, she also took out her Vibroblade. Holding her 'lamp' in one hand and a knife in the other, accompanied by the intermittent white light from her [Defence Forcefield], Lin Sanjiu felt more confident in herself.

However, this confidence didn't last for long.

After walking for a while, she kept feeling that something was amiss. The spot behind her, on her left, seemed especially dark. She slowly turned her head behind.

Not far behind her, in the darkness at the boundary of her silver light, she saw a lanky man walking. He was almost five meters tall and seemed to have noticed her slowing down. He bent down his very long neck.

His flat, sheet-white face, had no facial features and it was now facing Lin Sanjiu directly.

Sure enough, no one should walk in the darkness, because they would never know what followed behind them.

Chapter 191: Don't Go to Bamboo Grove Mountains Scenic Site (2)

Lin Sanjiu swung her vibroblade violently. Garden of Eden Laboratories had specifically designed the knife so that it was extendable. That swing extended the vibroblade to its maximum length at once. Lin Sanjiu swept its almost two-meter length blade at the creature, yet under the dim light, she felt the blade hitting nothing. Lin Sanjiu wasn't sure if she managed to cut that 'thing'.

There is a folklore from medieval Europe which describes a tall man without any facial features. Supposedly, there were still eyewitnesses even today. People who had been stalked by him in the forest, or woke up seeing him by their bed, would disappear forever.

Of course, this was just some ghost story and shouldn't apply to reality.

"Because in reality, that was not a 'man' per se."

Lin Sanjiu's [Ability Polishing Agent] was lying on the floor as Lin Sanjiu dropped it when she was scared just now. It rolled to and fro on the ground, so the light from it wasn't stable. Under this unreliable, wavering light, Lin Sanjiu stopped with her knife still in her hands—because the tall man had suddenly disappeared.

With the forest around her and the darkness, the man could simply disappear into the forest, and sneak up on her later at some unknown time. Lin Sanjiu stared in the direction where he disappeared off into. Then, she quickly crouched down and reached out for the small bottle of [Ability Polishing Agent] on the ground with her trembling fingers. She knew she couldn't stay, so she turned and quickly ran back down the road leading to this forest.

It wasn't that the road leading here was any safer, but Lin Sanjiu

just happened to glance at the forest on the mountain slope in the distant when the light from her [Ability Polishing Agent] was still wavering. There was a white circular shape above every tree. Even though they didn't have any facial features, those were obviously faces—and trees don't have faces.

In the mountains, as far as she could see, there were numerous tall 'men' staring at her quietly, standing shoulder-to-shoulder.

Her fear caused her [Defence Forcefield] to glow brighter. Her upper body was shining brightly, while her legs were totally dark. However, Lin Sanjiu couldn't really care about controlling the flow of her higher consciousness right now, and instead subconsciously tuned her [Defence Forcefield] till it maximum effect. She felt a few bursts of warmth from her chest while she ran forward as fast as she could.

There was only one main road from the Bamboo Grove Mountains scenic site to the station's public square. Most of the hotels and residential buildings were built along the two sides of the road. Lin Sanjiu rushed down the mountain road, she ran past the convenience store—she didn't see the cardboard standee—and just before she reached the hotel she was staying before, she stopped abruptly.

Through her labored breaths, Lin Sanjiu squinted and surveyed the dark surroundings around her; she didn't want to miss any sudden movements. All the lights from the hotel had been switched off, but the window from which Douglas had looked out was still opened. The room was dark, and there wasn't a single silhouette in sight.

The old cloth shoes, Douglas, and many other things spying on her could be hiding anywhere. In this pitch-black darkness, it was basically impossible for Lin Sanjiu to attend to every direction with just the dim light from her [Ability Polishing Agent]. To make things worse, she felt a constant stabbing in her head, as if that was a sign that she had almost used up all her higher

consciousness.

Lin Sanjiu didn't know what she should do if she didn't even have that little bit of protection. She felt that she was breathing so hard now that someone on another street would hear her. Yet, other than herself, the 'things' around her seemed to be playing deaf.

"Douglas, I don't know if you have realized this," Lin Sanjiu tried her best to keep her voice steady while she probed and took one step forward, "but you're actually dead. You died in the electronic store. I-I can give you a proper burial..."

Her mind was in such a muddle that she even recited what she heard on tv, "I can give you a proper burial, and I will even burn paper offerings. Can you just rest in peace?"

There was still only silence around her. Lin Sanjiu wasn't sure if Douglas could hear her from the hotel—that's if he was in the hotel. Lin Sanjiu listened carefully.

Darkness clouded everything around her, but she heard nothing. Lin Sanjiu's heart pounded and she decided to take this opportunity to run and leave this area first. However, she would never anticipate herself slowing down after just a few steps. Not far from her, there was a small little white cloth bundle lying on the floor. When Lin Sanjiu saw it, she instantly felt a burden off her shoulders and relaxed quite a bit.

"Who threw this here," Lin Sanjiu snatched a quick gasp of air and bent down to pick up her Teru Teru Bozu, but didn't dare to stay a second longer. "Nevermind, it's fine as long as I get it back!"

With her Teru Teru Bozu, she was no longer afraid that she would use up all her higher consciousness on her forcefield. Lin Sanjiu suddenly had a destination in mind and she dashed toward the train station.

As expected, when she was about to enter the public square outside the station, she saw a bit of white light coming out from

the station entrance. The lights in the train station were still on! The train station was now like a lone lighthouse in the dark. Being drawn to light was just human nature. Thus, Lin Sanjiu immediately felt a lot safer.

Once she leaped over the gantry and reached the station platform, she deactivated her [Defence Forcefield]. After all, her higher consciousness was very valuable; if she used it all up, she might faint on the spot. The train platform seemed the same. It was quiet, spacious and empty. A display screen showed the time in red digits; it was only six in the evening. Just when Lin Sanjiu was wondering where she could find a ladder so that she could hang her Teru Teru Bozu Defense System, she noticed something peculiar.

It wasn't her paranoia... She slowly turned her head.

Outside the glass wall of the train station, she saw Douglas standing in the darkness. He was smiling at her. He raised his hand and pointed to the gantry. His smile grew wider while he nodded to Lin Sanjiu and started walking toward the platform. He was wearing the pair of old cloth shoes.

"Douglas is coming! Just like those students!"

Every hair on Lin Sanjiu's body was standing on end; she froze for a second. Just then, the other end of the platform was suddenly lit by a strange white light. Then, without warning, she heard a loud rumbling noise. Almost as if it could sense that a passenger was on the platform, a train pulled into the station from the other end of the tunnel.

Lin Sanjiu watched in a daze as it stopped at the platform and the train doors of all its carriages opened. She saw the same carriage, the same green seats, and fluorescent lights... and the same cold wind assaulted her.

"Should I board?" Just when that thought surfaced, she heard the click from the gantry. A human-shaped shadow was just around

the corner.

"I'll board!"

Lin Sanjiu didn't have time to think so she just rushed into the familiar train carriage.

Chapter 192: With Much Anticipation, Lin Sanjiu has Died

This was indeed the train 'familiar' to her, but it wasn't exactly the same as the previous time. When Lin Sanjiu looked down and saw a squished newspaper between the crevice of a green seat, she felt a little perplexed. Even without reaching for it, she knew what was written on it. The handwriting on the surface of the newspaper matched her memory exactly. The only thing that was different was that the paper had a lot more wrinkles which were caused by Lin Sanjiu. After almost a day, Lin Sanjiu found herself on the same train she took when she came.

Noting this point, Lin Sanjiu was still very confused because that would mean that after she alighted, someone must have boarded the train, picked up the crumpled newspaper she randomly threw on the floor and stuffed it back in the crevice of the seat.

It almost seemed as if it boarding the same train wasn't just a mere coincidence. She was mystified and thought about it for some time, but finally gave up. After all, her current priority was to protect herself and not solve mysteries.

This time, Lin Sanjiu decided to do something different. Since the train had protected her from those spooky things twice, she was quite certain that being in the train was safer than being out there. That was probably the reason why the woman wrote the words, "don't alight". As for the large words that gave a different warning, there could be many reasons for it. Perhaps, it wasn't even written by the same person, so Lin Sanjiu decided not to think about it for now.

Suppressing the inexplicable uneasiness she felt, Lin Sanjiu stepped on a green seat. She stretched her arms and stuck her Teru Teru Bozu up on the train ceiling. The Teru Teru Bozu was attached to the ceiling immediately. It gently swayed with the

movement of the train. Lin Sanjiu scrutinized it for a few minutes before she sat down on the seat in front of it, contentedly.

Regardless, this time she wasn't going to alight from this train.

When she looked at the train route map, she saw that the stop after Bamboo Grove Mountains Station was Kitty Provincial Hospital. Even though the word 'kitty' made the name of the station a lot cuter, there was no way in hell anyone would alight, since hospitals are the known to be a hotbed for all sorts of ghost stories.

Furthermore, Lin Sanjiu had already decided that when the train doors opened at the next station, rather than waiting fearfully, she was going to check the driver's cabin...

"Huh?"

Lin Sanjiu straightened her back. Through the train windows, she could only see darkness. She didn't know if the train was in a tunnel or it was just nightfall. Although the fluorescent lights in the train weren't that stable, it was still bright in the train. Lin Sanjiu could see her reflection on the train window very clearly.

Naturally, she certainly noticed when there was another reflection beside her own. A large white Teru Teru Bozu was hanging from the train ceiling. It was directly behind Lin Sanjiu. It turned its head around to the face the train window; it flashed a black-marker-drawn smile at Lin Sanjiu through its reflection.

Lin Sanjiu's down jacket was useless against the cold breeze on the back of her neck. Lin Sanjiu leaped out of her seat and turned her body at the same time. She looked behind with a pale face, but the train carriage was as empty as before. There saw nothing behind her, and her Teru Teru Bozu was still hanging from the train ceiling. It was still its normal size.

Unfortunately, the air in the train grew colder and colder.

"Am I too paranoid?" she steadied her heavy breathing but did

not dare to let down her guard. She switched off the vibration of her vibroblade before using it to jab the Teru Teru Bozu.

The doll spun twice after she jabbed it with the tip of her knife. There wasn't anything wrong with its black-marker-drawn eyes and smile; it was the same as before. Lin Sanjiu looked at it and the train seat. Once again, she felt a strong "I don't want to sit there" feeling.

"That's weird. Why?"

It wasn't just that particular seat. In fact, whenever she approached any of the seats on the train, she would feel some aversion, as if sitting there was something repulsive to her.

"Forget it. Alright, I won't sit." She comforted herself, "Considering that this is a world of urban legends consumed by dark matter, there would always be something off... Maybe, I should look at the driver's cabin first."

"It's not like I have anything else to do. I can even prepare myself for any weird occurrences when the train stops." Actually, she wanted to leave her Teru Teru Bozu for the meantime so that she could calm herself. The train wasn't that long. After she walked through a dozen or so carriages, she reached the end of the train where the driver's cabin was. It was still locked.

Lin Sanjiu raised her hand and hesitated for a moment before knocking on the door lightly. She didn't know which situation was worse for her: if the door opened with a click, and she saw no one... or if she suddenly saw a train conductor smiling at her.

Luckily, she witnessed neither of these scenarios, the driver's cabin was quiet and there was no sign of any movement. Lin Sanjiu gritted her teeth and activated her [Mosaic Censorship], pressing both her hands on the lock. The lock was instantly blasted to bits, which flew everywhere. The door swung open slowly.

Cautiously, Lin Sanjiu used the tip of her knife and pushed the

door to open it further. Following which, she sighed in relief. She wouldn't say she was disappointed that there was no one in the room. There were only rows and rows of indicators with blinking lights. The train seemed to have been programmed for auto-driving. This also explained why the train was still operational in this world even after the apocalypse.

Lin Sanjiu stored her vibroblade and suddenly felt very exhausted. She didn't know if it was because the down jacket wasn't warm enough and she had to just endure the cold. She also didn't wish to remember all the spooky events she had experienced since she arrived in this Kisaragi Station world. In the end, she dragged her feet and returned to the train carriage with her Teru Teru Bozu, sitting down.

Then, her throat suddenly tightened

That wasn't just her imagination. It wasn't just a feeling! Lin Sanjiu's face quickly turned purple. Whatever grabbed her slowly squeezed out the air in her lungs. She heard a constant knocking sound in her mind as if her blood was attacking something. She tried her best to move her pupils to the corner of her eyes. From the reflection in the train window, she could see a white shroud around her neck.

"I need to get, get my vibroblade... "

That thought struggled to the surface of her mind. However, just as she felt her card appearing in her hand, a cold air enveloped her hand, and she could no longer move.

In a contradictory manner, her life slowly and rapidly left her body. After five minutes, Lin Sanjiu's body became flaccid, and she stopped struggling.

The second before she died, she saw everything. All the seats on the train were filled. Everyone on the train had a gray emotionless face. The old lady sitting on the seat she was on stretched out a dry claw-like hand and held her arms. So, she had been sitting on that

old lady.

And, this was why the girl scribbled for others to get down.

Chapter 193: After the Horror of Death Settles

Her corpse quickly turned rigid and cold. It slipped down the chair slowly and fell to the ground with a thud beside the train doors. The reflection of her lifeless face in the train window moved in tune with the movements of the train. Lin Sanjiu would never have guessed that she would end up in this situation today.

"Are you stupid?"

Mrs. Manas voice sounded from some unknown location. It was so sharp that it could almost pierce through the roof of the train. The sound of the train rumbling along the tracks had been totally overpowered by her furious yelling. "I took the extra precaution to shut myself away just so you could use your Defence Forcefield for a longer time... Yet, you ended up like this. What are you going to do?! What are you going to do?!"

Lin Sanjiu, with her current translucent form, 'squatted' beside her own corpse and watched as it grew stiffer and stiffer. Lin Sanjiu had no idea how she should answer Mrs. Manas. But, another puzzling question which bothered her was how she could 'see' the scene in front of her.

Lin Sanjiu could remember the moment the second before she died. Her whole body felt extremely cold and she couldn't move a single muscle. As her consciousness faded, her will to survive erupted within her. Her higher consciousness rushed out like flood water flowing through sluices and enveloped her... brain. As she had used up quite a lot of her higher consciousness before this happened, there was only sufficient amount to protect a small part of her.

When her corpse lost all support and slipped off the train seat, the only part of her body protected by her higher consciousness, now in a translucent form, remained in the same spot. In other

words, Lin Sanjiu had turned into a translucent, floating, brain... spirit.

"It's weird. How can I still see and hear?" Lin Sanjiu asked the irate Mrs. Manas.

A grayish-white translucent brain hanging mid-air shook once—right now there was no way anyone could identify Lin Sanjiu. "And, since I'm dead, why are you still here?"

Mrs. Manas remained quiet for some time, as if she was trying to control her anger. After a few minutes, trying her best to remember her responsibility as an educator, she finally replied with a strained voice, clearly holding back her anger, "Right now, your... spirit, is created by your concentrated, condensed higher consciousness. Did you forget that your high consciousness can be used for detection? If it didn't provide such detection, I wonder how you would have developed your observational skills in the past?"

"Oh!" the grayish-white brain nodded, showing that she understood. The brain spun in the air, seeming to survey the surroundings. All the things she couldn't see when she was alive, now lay bare in front of her.

It was the same scene she saw before her death. Every seat was occupied by a person with a dead, ashen face; their chests rose once only after a very long time, during which two streams of white gas would escape from their noses. It was quite creepy.

"No wonder Kisaragi Station World is so cold!"

The Teru Teru Bozu was also different from her memory: a girl with a lifeless, gray face was holding on to the Teru Teru Bozu tightly with both her hands. She was dangling from it, while her white flowing dress hung down over her body. From the height that the girl was hanging, the girl's dress was right at Lin Sanjiu's neck when she sat on the train seat.

When she saw the very thing which strangled her to death, Lin Sanjiu couldn't describe her feelings.

Without a body, she was no longer cold and since she could see everything, she was no longer afraid.

However, considering her current form, she didn't even know if she could continue existing in this manner tomorrow, let alone take revenge for herself.

"So... I'm dead?" The grayish-white brain floated down to her own corpse. "Does this mean I can only continue living as a brain-shaped spirit?"

This wasn't an easy question for Mrs. Manas. "Wait," she replied before disappearing for some time. Lin Sanjiu waited anxiously until Mrs. Manas spoke again.

"I already had some suspicions about this." The opening words to her explanation already caught Lin Sanjiu's attention. She continued, "No matter how powerful higher consciousness is, it can't defy true death. Your current state is perhaps a condition related to this world."

The grayish-white brain drifted a bit, "I have the same thoughts. This world is connected to urban legends and the supernatural after all, so spirits do exist here... But, I think I'm a little different from them."

The grayish-white brain floated to the side of the old lady while communicating. If the brain had a finger, Lin Sanjiu would definitely stick her finger on the old lady's nose.

The expression of the gloomy-looking old lady did not change one bit. Her saggy half-opened eyes, hidden under the layers of wrinkles, showed almost no awareness of Lin Sanjiu's presence. The old lady just tilted her head a bit, and did not treat Lin Sanjiu as a target.

"Well, they retained their human forms, but you are just a brain,"

Mrs. Manas pointed out.

"No, that's not what I meant. Erm, how should I word this? Right now, I still have my own thoughts and can somewhat act according to my own will. This is probably because of my higher consciousness, right? If I didn't have my higher consciousness, what would happen?"

Mrs. Manas wanted to reply, "then, you'd definitely die", but she suddenly thought of Douglas and immediately found herself speechless. She knew how valuable higher consciousness was to a user who could utilize it, but she had never mentioned this specifically to Lin Sanjiu. Besides, this ability was extremely rare, so it wasn't possible that Douglas was also using higher consciousness to continue existing and moving around after he died.

"Therefore, my guess is that... after this world had been invaded by dark matter, everyone was killed by or assimilated with dark matter. Anyway, they all became part of this creepy supernatural world, or a unique type of duoluozhong that only exists here at Kisaragi Station. They are not alive. That's why Douglas could hear the sound of my higher consciousness."

Lin Sanjiu was astonished by her own calmness. It was rather incredible that she could rationally think through all these while being in this awkward, strange state. Her objective of saying that wasn't really about explaining herself to Mrs. Manas, but rather to reorganize her thoughts.

"I constantly felt very cold, and this might be an indication that I was being 'corroded' by dark matter. After I've been more or less 'consumed' by dark matter, these unique duoluozhongs easily killed me." Lin Sanjiu floated down and looked at her pair of widened dead eyes. The brain shivered in midair. "But, they can't even imagine that I could exist in this form... I didn't survive their attack, but also didn't turn into a duoluozhong."

"That's right... Considering your current condition, who knows what will happen to you after 14 months?" Mrs. Manas sighed. The grayish white brain did not give a reply. It simply floated down and stopped above the corpse.

"At the end of 14 months, will you be sent to another world? If you are sent to a world without dark matter, would you die immediate? Hun? HOLY F*CK! Where is your body?!"

Chapter 194: You Shouldn't Stick Your Card in Your Brain!

When the usually nurturing Mrs. Manas swore out loud, Lin Sanjiu's shock far exceeded the teacher's. Lin Sanjiu found herself momentarily dumbfounded. Unfortunately, due to her current form, which was just a brain in mid-air, no one could see her emotions from the folds in her brain's white matter.

After quite some time, she explained hesitantly, "I-I just thought that it'd be good if I could convert my body into a card... so, I touched it with my 'head' and it really became a card..."

After calming down for two minutes, Mrs. Manas finally understood what had happened.

Usually, after Lin Sanjiu changed something into a card, she would keep the card in her body. After that, it would appear in a 'catalog' in her brain—which was her card inventory. However, without her body, where would the items be kept?

"Where did her/my body go?"

Both Lin Sanjiu and Mrs. Manas became anxious. Following Mrs. Manas' advice, Lin Sanjiu floated close to the ground. With a single thought, her body appeared from nowhere and fell to the ground with a thud. Lin Sanjiu didn't even notice that there was a small cut on her temples because she was too shocked. After both of them discussed for some time, they were still unable to understand how it worked.

Seeing that they could not make sense of it by discussing, Mrs. Manas warned Lin Sanjiu not to be rash and disappeared once again. Lin Sanjiu figured that Mrs. Manas probably planned to check the entire 'brain form' she was now in before returning.

Lin Sanjiu was a little worried about the situation, but being able to store her own body was a good thing. She floated gently to her

body and 'touched' it. It instantly became a card again. In any case, keeping her body with her was the safest bet.

Without Mrs. Manas talking to her, Lin Sanjiu flew unsteadily around the train carriages. The flickering fluorescent lights in the train were caused by a man who was scuttling along the ceiling of a train, like a gecko. Whenever he scurried past one of the fluorescent light, it would go out. Once he left, it would light up again. Lin Sanjiu couldn't help but wonder if her previous experience with flickering lights were all caused by such a man—but she had no idea what sort of urban legend this 'fluorescent light man' was from.

Looking at her Teru Teru Bozu, she guessed she couldn't keep it any longer. The woman, who was dangling from the Teru Teru Bozu, had buried her head in it, so her sinister face was showing through the cloth. Lin Sanjiu could only see the two black eyes of the originally cute, smiling face on the doll following her—as a brain. For a second, Lin Sanjiu was afraid that the woman would suddenly reach out to grab her.

The other passengers were sitting silently in their seat and did not even bothered looking at the floating brain in the air. After Lin Sanjiu roamed about the train, she found out that there were 'people' in the driver's cabin as well. Every now and then, she would see some of the passengers shifting a little in their seats. However, considering the current situation, the unique duoluozhongs in Kirasagi Train Station were not interested in attacking her in this state.

With some thoughts in her mind, she drifted back to the carriage where she died. She tried to call Mrs. Manas a few times but she did not receive any reply. Lin Sanjiu floated in mid-air absent-mindedly. As her mind wandered to the problems about her future, she didn't immediately notice when the old woman on the seat in the carriage suddenly moved.

"So, this explains things..." Lin Sanjiu couldn't help sighing after

she eyed the old woman for a few seconds. The old woman's limbs were very stiff and she seemed to have difficulties coordinating her movements. The old woman stood up rigidly. Her body was stuck in the position where she was bending over at a 90 degrees angle. She maneuvered in a way that almost seemed as if her back was breaking. The old woman reached for the newspaper that Lin Sanjiu had thrown to the ground and stuffed it back into the crevice between the seat.

That was the same paper that warned new passengers not to get down the train. Lin Sanjiu understood its significance after thinking about it for some time. In the past, someone must have written that message and stayed on the train for some time. The person eventually found out that there was something terribly wrong with the train but was harmed before she could finish writing her contradictory warning. The first piece of advice had been turned off by the spirits on the train and placed in an easily noticeable spot. In other words, the paper with the original piece of advice had been used as a trap.

But Lin Sanjiu couldn't figure out why the ghostly old woman would suddenly remember to return the newspaper to its original position. Could it be—

"Good news!" A loud exuberant broke her chain of thought. It was Mrs. Manas.

"I have already check your current condition thoroughly. I know what is going on now..." she sounded happier than before Lin Sanjiu died, "It isn't your time yet. Plus, this is great for you!"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you are currently in this brain form because you had expended almost all your higher consciousness. It can only protect and surround that portion of you. After you died, though you do not have your body, your higher consciousness is still gradually recovering. You can't see it yourself, but with that little bit of

recovered higher consciousness, you created a small pocket at the back of your brain. Your card is currently kept there. That is to say, your card didn't disappear, your consciousness just hid it."

"But my other cards are in my body, right? Like my knife, special items... Without my body, is this anything to be happy about?"

Mrs. Manas voice immediately turned cold and she spoke sternly to Lin Sanjiu, "I wanted to point this out long ago... As a posthuman, don't you think you are over-reliant on your items and your physique? Any other person who can activate [Defence Forcefield] could probably maintain it for a week, whereas you are unable to handle things without your special items... You don't even bother working on your abilities."

Lin Sanjiu considered what Mrs. Manas said and she couldn't help feeling a little ashamed. Honestly speaking, her fighting style in battles had not changed much from the time she killed Ren Nan with a kitchen knife. The differences were perhaps that the weapons she used had improved and she had become agiler.

"Now that you have become a form made of higher consciousness, this could be an opportunity for you," Mrs. Manas was very positive about it. "From today, I will coach you to use your higher consciousness. You will have to practice your overall proficiency using it, controlling its amount and strength. Once you can use your higher consciousness to sculpt an exact replica of your body... No, that wouldn't mean you are alive. I mean, by then, we can see if you can link the replica created by higher consciousness with your actual body..."

"So higher consciousness can be used as an all-purpose adhesive?" Lin Sanjiu didn't know whether to laugh or cry at this conclusion. However, she couldn't deny that seeing hope in her current situation made her feel much better.

"Anyway, duoluozhongs are uninterested in you now and posthumans are unable to see you. You have 14 months to work

hard..." Before Mrs. Manas could finish her sentence, her words were proven wrong.

At the same time, the noise of the train traveling on the tracks quietened. Without any other warning, the train had stopped at a station. The train doors opened.

"There are many of them here in this train... Huh? Why is there a brain here?"

Chapter 195: So What if You've Learned This?

A yellow piece of paper swooshed around in the air. It whirred and finally hit the old woman who was sitting all dignified in her seat. She instantly let out a painful hiss and suddenly rushed toward the person who just boarded the train. Then, she stopped right in front of his face, within a breath's distance.

Five minutes ago, the train had stopped at Kitty Provincial Hospital station. A pair of teenagers, a boy and a girl, boarded the train. Their cheerfulness and casual demeanor stood out like a sore thumb in this inexplicable world.

When Lin Sanjiu saw them, she slowly floated to the back of the train carriage while they were not noticing, hoping to find a chance to slip away. Even though those two people were definitely alive and living, Lin Sanjiu did not want to have anything to do with them. They didn't seem to have any ill intentions, but...

"Bro, are you keeping it alive because you want to KISS it?" The teenage girl, with a crop of dazzling pink short hair, laughed as she punched the teenage boy teasingly. Then, she turned to the old woman and yelled, "Hehe! Sister-in-law!"

The teenage boy had a childish face. He wore a pair of baggy skate pants and a pair of sneakers that seemed too large for him. He looked less than two years older than the girl and had some pimples on his face. He was furious, "Shaddup! This page isn't good, try yours!"

"Okay," the girl replied in a surprisingly cooperative manner. She searched through the pockets of her tulle dress, took out a pair of gloves and wore them. The old woman creepily turned her head to look at the girl and received a punch on her face while the girl

shouted loudly, "Superstition is banned after the founding of our country!" Bright light exuded from both her hands and smoke started to pour out from the old woman's head like a piece of burning paper. Soon, the old woman vanished like smoke in thin air.

Not only could the siblings see the spirits on the train, they also handled them swiftly and proficiently, without showing any fear.

"Look at them! And look at yourself!" Mrs. Manas chided Lin Sanjiu quietly.

The grayish-white brain immediately drifted to the second carriage, appearing to be remorseful. But, Lin Sanjiu didn't hide because she wanted to go to a corner and reflect about her actions. Rather, Lin Sanjiu felt that her current predicament was like an unfortunate puppy which fell into the hands of some mischievous children.

The teenagers were about fifteen or sixteen, the youthful age where kids liked to do crazy stuff. While Lin Sanjiu slowly drifted away from them. Both of them eradicated the spirit-like duoluozhongs one after another, almost clearing half the spirits in that carriage. From the girl's excited expression, this was pure fun for them.

Since they could see her brain form created from her higher consciousness, Lin Sanjiu had no idea how she could protect herself if they attacked her mistaking her for one of those spirits. She slowly floated to the ceiling of the train. She found the fluorescent light man in the same carriage, he was quick and had escaped to this carriage somehow. Lin Sanjiu headed in the opposite direction from him and found a crack to hide in. From this carriage, she could observe the two kids clearly through the carriage door.

The girl obliterated two spirit duoluozhongs. Noticing that she had killed more duoluozhongs than her brother, she couldn't help

bouncing happily on the spot. She wore white socks and a pair of pink Mary Janes. As she bounced, the many accessories all over her body jingled.

"Alright! Alright! You arrogant brat," the boy's ability seemed to be out of form and he was eager to give in to her. He sat on one of the seats and said to her, "We just have to clear one carriage. Can you just calm down and take a seat?"

The girl put her hands to her waist and looked around the carriage. Her next words almost made Lin Sanjiu's heart miss a beat—that is, if Lin Sanjiu still had a heart.

"Isn't it odd? Where did that brain go? What supernatural story is that from?"

"Forget it. Anyway, it's just a brain." The boy placed his legs on the opposite train seat callously. A pair of white hands grabbed his ankles, "How bothersome! There is still one more here. Give me another page!"

Once he said that, a piece of yellow paper appeared from nowhere and struck the pair of hands. The hands instantly disappeared. The teenager sneered and took back that piece of paper, "That's more like it."

His sister showed little concern for her brother and continued searching for the brain. Lin Sanjiu tried her best to hide between the gap between the layered wall of the train, however, her brain form was too round so she couldn't really hide properly.

"Lin Sanjiu, you are currently in a higher consciousness form. You can change your form to some extent..." Mrs. Manas hinted after seeing her struggle, "Go ahead and try..."

"I see." Lin Sanjiu imagined herself hitting her own forehead, and quickly calmed herself. When she still had her body, she could clearly feel her limbs even with her eyes closed. Yet now, when she really concentrated on herself, she could only feel herself as a light

blob. Her form wasn't even that stable. Whenever she was emotional, that brain form of hers would change a little. But, she soon found that within this blob, there was a "nucleus".

"What is that?" she asked curiously.

"This is the thing your higher consciousness retained from your brain. Your mind, your conscious, or whatever you call it. It is the thing that defines you as Lin Sanjiu and not someone else. This isn't important. The girl is coming here!"

Hearing that, Lin Sanjiu immediately focused her attention on that 'nucleus'. All of a sudden, her higher consciousness transmitted a sensation to her, it was as if she was surrounded by soothing, gentle waves of water.

"If I pull that bit of higher consciousness closer, I can hide in that corner..." At that moment, Lin Sanjiu mind wasn't on hiding from the girl, she was totally absorbed by the sensation she felt within her form.

"No wonder Buddhists scriptures refer to human's mortal body as a sack of skin." Without her body, Lin Sanjiu executed her every thought and will quickly and gracefully. With a single command, her higher consciousness surged and circulated. The feeling was incredible.

Mrs. Manas was a little surprised to 'see' the brain become thinner and thinner until it finally had a spindle shape. Lin Sanjiu managed to hide herself entirely behind the first layer of wall. Even though she gave Lin Sanjiu that idea, she didn't expect Lin Sanjiu to become proficient so quickly even without her guidance.

But just when Lin Sanjiu thought she could relax a little, someone pried open the first layer of wall. The teenage girl narrowed her bright round eyes, "Oh? You even know how to hide?"

Chapter 196: Are You Stupid?

"I thought duoluozhongs that had turned into spirits only knew how to deceive and kill people..." the girl commented sweetly while she smoothed out her gloves. She was standing on one of the train seats and was stepping on the neck of a man with a gray face. Her Mary Jane seemed to be some sort of special item so the man was unable to move. He struggled on the same spot while the girl ignored him. The girl stretched out her arms and encircled the brain. Lin Sanjiu didn't even have any time to escape.

"You're must be a pretty smart duoluozhong," the girl chuckled. She looked a little gleeful and a little absent-minded. Her gloves glowed as she placed them on Lin Sanjiu. Mrs. Manas, who had spotted the girl seconds ago, was mad with worry. "What should we do?" she said repetitively, giving Lin Sanjiu a headache. As the gloves were about to reach her, Lin Sanjiu hollered, "Shut up!" Following which, Lin Sanjiu immobilized all her higher consciousness and created a flow aiming forward.

A second before the gloves could touch the surface of the brain, the girl let out a gasp, "Huh?" She quickly stopped and withdrew her attack. The grayish-white brain in front of her had changed its shape and now looked like a dagger. It hung in front of her, preparing to attack. Even though it didn't look that sharp, the girl couldn't help hesitating as this was the first time encountering such a situation.

After thinking for a second, the girl turned and shouted, "Bro, I found the brain. It can even morph... Huh? Ahhh!"

The teenage boy heard a loud thud and quickly leaped up. His sister's voice seemed a little off, so he quickly hurried to the carriage she was in and asked, "What happened?"

The moment he stepped into the carriage, he paused. Then, he covered his mouth and his shoulders started trembling. He did not

move from the carriage door and started bending over.

"What are you laughing at!"

The girl who had fallen on the ground in a mess was furious when she saw her brother laughing at her. However, her voice was a little wobbly after being punched right in the middle of her face. She even had a nosebleed. "Quick, look for that brain! That shitty thing punched me and ran away!"

The teenage boy seemed to enjoy the sight of his sister in a rather sorry state. After some time, he slowly agreed. He headed to the back of the carriage and looked around... with a rather casual attitude.

"Where are you looking? Could it be outside the window? Go to the fourth carriage, go there!" the girl shouted unhappily.

Lin Sanjiu held her dagger form for a while just as a distraction, whereas, she used all her 'lifeforce'—though she did not have her body, she managed to condense her entire form to create a significant amount of force—to knock that girl off balance. The girl's eyes filled with tears while she continued feeling dizzy. Some time had passed, but her nose was still bleeding like a dripping faucet.

Her brother had disappeared from her view for quite some time and had not returned. A weird dough-like being, appearing almost as if someone stretched a human body, slowly crept towards her. Once it exhaled a breath of cold air, directing it at the girl's neck, she reacted with a punch without even looking. The creature was immediately punched far away from her, while she held her nose with another hand.

"Bastard! How dare you hit me! I must destroy you! Just a duoluozhong..." the girl wiped the tears from her face. Her face felt scathing hot. "Brother, where the hell did you go anyway? Why aren't you back?" She had barely spouted those words when she heard her brother's voice coming from a few carriages away. As the

noise from the traveling train was too loud, the girl almost didn't hear what he said: "Rena, let me ask you something!"

"What?" the girl named Rena snapped, there were less tears clouding her eyes. "If you are not looking for that brain, what do you have to say to me?"

"Do you think... the brain is a spirit duoluozhong?" Her brother sounded unruffled—anyway, he wasn't the one who was hurt. "But it is weird... We're wearing anti-corrosion outfits which work perfectly against black matter. We haven't been assimilated at all, so how can it touch you?"

"Oh?" The girl froze for a second.

In Kisaragi Station World, everything was being corroded by black matter at different speeds. Humans and things related to humans had the fastest corrosion rates. Other than a handful of people, most of the original human population in this world had died as a result of this. When they died, a large number of them turned into duoluozhongs—taking the form of supernatural spirits.

When a person from a foreign world first arrived at Kisaragi Station, the person's body had not been assimilated by black matter. Thus, they would be unable to touch or see any of the spirits. Although the spirits could see that person, they couldn't touch the person until that person had been corroded by black matter to a certain extent.

That is to say, if the brain could touch her...

While the girl sat on the floor in a daze, her brother's footsteps quickly approached her. There was a gray brain floating rather sluggishly above him. When Lin Sanjiu relaxed, without controlling her form, she naturally transformed back to the shape of a brain.

"Ah! That's the one!" the girl jumped up and the multiple

accessories all over her body jangled along. Before she could pounce on it, her brother immediately turned sideways and defended the brain, "Just wait! She is not a duoluozhong!"

The girl stared at her brother with her half-opened mouth, displaying an expression that showed that she knew what he said was possible but was reluctant to accept it.

"It's pretty much your fault for demanding that you wanted to kill stuff on the train." Her brother grinned as he planted his hands into his pockets as if he didn't participate in massacring the other spirit duoluozhongs just moments before. "She attacked you out of self-defense. It was unavoidable, I guess. But, I had a good chat with her."

"Chat?" the girl frowned, "It's just a brain. How do you talk to it?"

Lin Sanjiu immediately demonstrated how they communicated.

Even though she had only used her higher consciousness in this manner for a few times, her control had improved significantly. The brain slowly became longer and thinner. Then, it was partitioned into a few small subsections. Each subsection slowly transformed into alphabets which spelled: Are you stupid?

There was even a question mark.

Chapter 197: People Will Seek Our Autograph in Red Nautilus

The news about the destruction brought by the two teenagers spread quickly within the spirits in the other carriages. Consequently, all the duoluozhongs in the trains avoided the carriage while the two siblings and Lin Sanjiu were in, leaving it nice and clean, with working fluorescent lights which didn't flicker and the rhythmic sound of the train chugging along the tracks.

"Erm, if you aren't a duoluozhong, what are you?" The teenager called Reno asked while he reclined in his seat. Even though he was quite skinny, he tried to make his actions more mature and unrestrained. After he asked Lin Sanjiu this question cheerfully, he threw a sidelong glance at his unhappy sister, Rena, who couldn't help looking their way.

Lin Sanjiu slowly changed her form to state the word 'human'. She seemed rather cold, displaying even some sense of superiority, even though she was just an organ. But, Lin Sanjiu had no choice because being friendly was too tiring and costly. Using her current form to create words wasn't something easy for her so she didn't want to make a single superfluous word.

When she spelled the word 'stupid', she was just showing her anger. She really had to thank the siblings for their non-stop rivalry. If the brother didn't have the constant urge to make fun of his sister, and if his sister wasn't a sensible person, Lin Sanjiu would really have a hard time escaping from this situation. She was certainly in extreme danger when she was found by Reno.

Luckily, though she didn't really know how to deal with those kids personality and tempers, they seemed kind-hearted. "If you are a human, how did you end up like this?" Rena blurted, unable to quash her curiosity.

Unfortunately, the question was a little too complicated. If Lin

Sanjiu had to control her form to slowly spell out what had happened, she would die from exhaustion. After giving it some thought, she spelled out two words: Too long.

"Blah, you're haughty!" Rena rolled her eyes, "Brother, listen to me. Duoluozhongs are all very crafty. Maybe, this is some sort of special duoluozhong... Don't blame me for not warning you if something goes wrong."

"Oh," Reno answered without minding one bit. "Do you think I am as stupid as you? When I first saw her, I already used my ability to confirm that she isn't a duoluozhong."

Bringing this up, Lin Sanjiu instantly felt sullen.

When Reno found her, she really thought that she was done for. Existing in her higher consciousness form, Lin Sanjiu found out that she could sense some things she had never noticed before. This was especially true when she was dealing with other humans. She realized that she could now easily pick up her opponent's every breath and observable information.

Moments ago, when she was trapped in a corner by Reno, she immediately sensed that the teen was definitely stronger than his sister. In addition, he took a firmer stance than his sister. The teenager had muttered something and waved his hands. A page of yellow paper appeared from nowhere. Just when Lin Sanjiu expected that she would be attacked by it and gathered all her higher consciousness planning to endure the attack straight on, the paper was already in front of her. Following which, it disappeared in mid-air with a 'snap'. It didn't even touch her.

In her pure higher consciousness form, she quickly sensed that some faint impurity was flowing within her 'body'.

"Is this his attack?" Lin Sanjiu wondered, but before she could complete her thought the teenager responded.

"Huh? That's weird. My [Almanac] only reacts like this to humans..."

[Did you check your almanac before leaving your house today?]

It is quite a pity that young people nowadays ignore the importance of calendar systems. Doesn't everyone know how awesome almanacs are? How many generations of imperial astronomers have poured their efforts into systems, divination, astronomy, and trigrams to create the perpetual calendar? Yet, no one bothers to look at it now? Isn't that unbelievable? This ability emerged in order to restore Chinese traditional culture.

Effects: Works like a curse. The user can call out a page of his almanac at any time to target his opponent (it doesn't have to be an enemy). The predictions of fortune on that page would 'influence' the opponent for a certain period of time. This has a 100% accuracy and this attack cannot be evaded. The duration of the effect is random.

Note: The content of the almanac is completely random. The predictions provide a random effect... There have been occasions when it provided a boost to the user's enemy.

PS: Only humans would be affected by the curse. The pages of the almanac had long been used for exorcism and to drive away evil, thus the ability can be used as an attack on the opponent. In other words, if the opponent is a human, the curse ability would be activated first. If it is not human, or according to the user's wishes, the combat ability would be activated.

Considering that the almanac page did not cause any direct harm, a thought flashed through her mind. Before she could rejoice over not dying, she quickly reacted by spelling out words and thus was able to communicate. She 'conversed' with the teenager briefly. But, they finally reached an awkward silence where both looked at each other.

"What is my fortune?"

It was hard for Lin Sanjiu to spell out four words, but Reno understood what she meant. "Erm..." he hesitated. He shook his head and appeared to find it difficult to answer her.

"I have a 'carbon copy' here, you can look at it yourself..." With that, Reno showed Lin Sanjiu the page he used on her.

This was the reason why Lin Sanjiu felt sullen when this topic was brought up.

"Bro, so what is the content of that page?" Rena asked eagerly. After hearing how the whole situation played out to this point, Rena was no longer angry, but instead had a cheeky expression, almost as if she had prepared herself to laugh out loud at the brain in front of her.

Reno coughed, "Energies for the day make it suitable for marriage, unsuitable... unsuitable for consummation."

Compared to her brother, Rena was unembarrassed about such matters. She slapped her thighs and bowed over laughing, "Ha ha ha ha! It must be hard to suppress your urges!" Rena felt that she finally got revenge over being questioned by that brain about her intelligence.

The gray brain couldn't display her expression at all, so Lin Sanjiu did feel restrained! She changed into two large exclamation marks, but it was useless.

After Rena finally finished laughing, Lin Sanjiu asked the siblings about their backgrounds.

"We are famous around Red Nautilus," Rena said boastfully as she raised her chin, and her round eyes sparkled. "Anyway, anyone who had lived there a few years would have definitely heard of us, siblings."

However, Lin Sanjiu had never even heard of Red Nautilus.

"You're such a country bumpkin! Have you heard of the Twelve Worlds Centrum?"

Chapter 198: Who Would Have Known That Lin Sanjiu Was That Famous

Twelve Worlds Centrum was a consortium of twelve gigantic fortified worlds which had been chosen, built and modified over generations of posthumans. Nobody knew if these twelve worlds were geographically and dimensionally close to each other. In fact, there isn't any real alliance between them. In the early days, some of the large worlds didn't even know of each other's existence.

Due to their natural resources and level of development and modifications, they were gradually grouped together and named Twelve Worlds Centrum. Even though this wasn't Lin Sanjiu's first meeting with a resident from the Twelve World Centrum, she was very curious and had many questions. Unfortunately, it was difficult to ask them these questions now.

Thankfully, Rena was very proud of her hometown. Without asking much, Rena chirped non-stop about her world like a little bird, "Red Nautilus isn't the largest world among the Twelve World Centrum, but it is at least in the middle in terms of geographical area. In the beginning, the ecosystem of this world was invaded by some extraterrestrial organism called 'red nautilus'. It caused a mass extinction of animals and other organisms. Naturally, humans couldn't survive, but now... Hey, why are you hitting me?"

"You talk too much," Reno glared, "who wants to hear your history lesson?"

Lin Sanjiu quickly spelled the world, "me".

Unexpectedly, Rena narrowed her eyes and giggled, showing her a 'serves-you-right' expression and instead stopped her narration. Once again, Lin Sanjiu felt the frustration brought by the [Did you check your almanac before leaving your house today?] curse.

"Let's get back to the main topic, how did you become this?" Reno still had his mind on the issue. "We have been here in this world for a couple of months for our training. We haven't seen any exceptions... If a person is totally corroded by black matter, or somehow killed by the duoluozhongs here, there are only two outcomes: that person either dies or becomes a ghost. After becoming a duoluozhong, that person would not know anything except to deceive, kill and threaten. But, this is the first time I've seen someone in your form..."

The brain nodded a few times in midair, but the siblings didn't know what it was trying to express.

This also stirred Rena's curiosity. She approached Lin Sanjiu, acting as if she wanted to look out of the window, and crept to the back of the brain. Rena stretched out her finger trying to touch the brain. However, Lin Sanjiu could sense the area around her like it was part of her current 'body', so when Rena turned around, Lin Sanjiu already floated upward avoid her finger.

"Are you a guy?" Rena stared, "Why don't you let me touch you?"

Lin Sanjiu didn't know how to reply. After thinking for a second, she spelled out what she wanted to say honestly, "Female. No." Meaning, even though she was a female, you shouldn't go about touching people without their consent.

Rena fully understood what she meant and sneered. She went back to her seat while her brother laughed. Lin Sanjiu floated closer to Reno, who seemed easier to deal with and spelled: "Talk about Kisaragi."

"Do you mean... you want me to tell you more about Kisaragi Station?" Reno rubbed his smooth chin, confirming. The brain nodded as expected, and he gave an expression of deep thought, "Well... Being in this world seem effortless to us because we already gathered information about it beforehand. We specifically prepared ourselves before coming here, so you asked the right

person. Huh? Why the question mark? Of course, we got information from people who had been to this world! In any case, you have to be very careful when you're in a B-level world! You shouldn't... Even though I don't know what happened to you, but I guess it can't be anything good."

When Lin Sanjiu heard the words 'B-level world', she was shocked. But, this was immediately replaced by frustration again.

"I guess you already know about the corrosive nature of black matter here. But that is a small problem. Even though most posthumans don't develop the 'Black Matter Resistance' ability, you'll be fine as long as you don't eat or drink anything from this world. Considering our body constitutions, it isn't hard to survive 14 months."

"I guess the duoluozhongs here are the hardest things to guard against."

Rena seemed to agree with her brother wholly as she nodded her head.

"We have been to quite a few places, but we haven't been to a world where there are so many variations of duoluozhongs... Other than the duoluozhongs on this train, who wait for people to fall into their trap, there are others who would deceive you. They will trick you believe that they would provide you protection from the other duoluozhongs..."

Lin Sanjiu immediately thought of the students and teacher from Mausoleum Elementary. In retrospect, they seemed to be warning her not to stay on the train. Their warning was right, but according to Reno, if she did alight at that stop, nothing good would have happened to her in the end.

"...and there are also duoluozhongs who disguise themselves as normal humans..."

Douglas' face appeared in Lin Sanjiu's mind.

"There are those which would possess human-like items or things that are related to humans, so it is easy to overlook them."

The old cloth shoes, cardboard standee, the Teru Teru Bozu and others...

"Then, there are all sorts of supernatural beings. They would randomly follow you or appear like in one of the stories..."

Lin Sanjiu thought of the tall men in the forest.

Thinking back, Lin Sanjiu realized that the various types of duoluozhongs she encountered in a single day could fill up an encyclopedia about this world.

"Even though we prepared ourselves well before coming here, we suffered a lot before this. That's why it looks effortless for us," Reno added the last sentence probably to comfort Lin Sanjiu.

"Says who? Bro, weren't you scared away by the Kitty Provincial Hospital?" Rena was quick to ridicule her brother. Reno jumped up and retorted, "That's because I'm afraid of cats! Not duoluozhongs!" Once again, the siblings started their meaningless bickering.

Lin Sanjiu smiled bitterly in her mind. Even without explanations, she knew that the siblings were different from people like her, who was a survivor from a new apocalyptic world. They were born in a world where the apocalyptic worlds were already an integral part of life and were educated to survive these situations. Naturally, the siblings had an easier time adapting mentally and physically.

"So, the Twelve World Centrum is really such an ideal place? " Just when Lin Sanjiu was engrossed by her own thoughts, Reno stopped bickering as if he suddenly remembered something. He turned to Lin Sanjiu and asked, "Hey, what's your name?"

"Lin Sanj-" Lin Sanjiu spelled out these alphabets when she remembered another person from the Twelve Worlds Centrum,

Puppeteer. She froze.

Much to her surprise, the siblings exchanged glances before scruntizing her. All of a sudden, they shouted in unison, "Are you Lin Sanjiu?!"

Chapter 199: Common Etiquette? It Feels Like Eighth-grader Syndrome

When a brain tries to act dumb, it shouldn't be that easy to figure out...

Lin Sanjiu quickly erased the words and returned to her brain shape. She floated up and down on the spot, acting like she was puzzled by their actions before she made a "?" symbol.

"Stop acting dumb!" Rena bounced, she wished she could just jab the brain a few times, "Who are you kidding with! You were going to form two more letters! That means your full name has nine letters!"

Lin Sanjiu had to segregate her 'brain' into the right number of alphabets before spelling out the words she wanted, so she did make that mistake. But, she didn't expect Rena to be that sharp. She floated in mid-air for some time, wondering how they would come to know her name, but remained 'silent'.

"I know you are Lin Sanjiu, right? Since you are female, I am sure your parents won't called you Lin Sanj and it sounds weird anyway." Reno also approached with his face up close. At that point, the siblings' faces were directly looming above her; their face appeared very large as they stuck very closely to her.

Knowing that it was pretty useless to continue denying, Lin Sanjiu started growing anxious. She knew that if they were from the Twelve Worlds Centrum, they must have known her name because of Puppeteer. She really didn't expect that a chance meeting with these siblings from Twelve Worlds Centrum would actually be related to Puppeteer.

"If I try to escape, what is the probability of success?" Just as she considered her escape route and 'eyed' the other end of the carriage, Rena suddenly exclaimed, "Wow!" The girl probably

assumed that Lin Sanjiu had admitted her name with the silence. The girl's eyes sparkled with excitement, "You must be Lin Sanjiu!" She sounded as if a legendary character from some story was beside her.

Before Lin Sanjiu could react, Reno almost patted her and said jovially, "That's great! Ha ha ha!"

The grayish brain quickly sunk down, avoiding the boy's palm. Then, it made a question mark again.

Lin Sanjiu could tell from their reaction that they meant her no harm.

The siblings looked at each other and suddenly straightened their faces. They withdrew their guffaw and boisterous expressions and stood up straight and put on their serious faces as if they had something to announce.

"This is just common etiquette, so don't be alarmed." Fortunately, Reno gave Lin Sanjiu a heads-up. The brain, surprised by the situation, nodded on the spot, showing that it understood.

Rena started first. She placed one foot behind her, pulled the sides of her tulle dress and bowed a little, giving a curtsy somewhat like that of old European court etiquettes. While her accessories jangled, the girl spoke stately with her chirpy voice, "I, Progressor Alliance, Red Nautilus Division member, Rena, welcome you as our fellow compatriot."

Reno placed an arm in front of himself. Lin Sanjiu only noticed then that there was a hidden pocket on the side of his shirt. Reno placed his hand into the hidden pocket and made a strange bow, saying, "I, Progressor Alliance, Red Nautilus Division member, Reno, welcome you as our fellow compatriot."

"Progressor Alliance?"

Lin Sanjiu noticed the name and many questions quickly poured into her mind. There was so much she wanted to ask! For example,

what was Progressor Alliance? Why did they know her? Why did the Alliance give a damn about someone like her? Was it because of Puppeteer? But she only successfully escaped from him, she didn't really do much...

However, if she had to ask these questions by spelling out everything slowly, she probably couldn't even get them answered when she needed to leave Kisaragi Station World. At that moment, she really felt like a groom who couldn't consummate with his newly-wed wife just in front of him. She was extremely frustrated. She wished she could beg the generations of imperial astronomers to take away the effect of that almanac.

Even though the siblings weren't considerate people, they remembered to give her a brief introduction. That was only after they broke from their weird etiquette from their world and reverted back to their usual carefree attitude. Rena rearranged her pink wig while Reno leaned back in his seat with his legs crossed.

Rena swayed her legs as she sat in her seat, explaining, "Ah, you probably don't know about us. From our name, Progressor Alliance, you probably know what we are. Usually, growth type posthumans would choose to join our alliance, since you would get protection, and we are famous..."

"So these siblings are also growth-types..." Lin Sanjiu sighed to herself while she couldn't help feeling curious at the same time. If there were enough growth-type posthumans to form an alliance, why did Puppeteer react so strongly previously when he saw her?

She really wanted to ask that question, but considering the length, it would be impossible now. "Once I regain more higher consciousness, I am going to make a mouth for myself!" Lin Sanjiu thought angrily to herself.

"Puppeteer is infamous in Twelve World Centrum, he isn't someone easy to deal with." Although Reno said that, he had a fearless naiveness, as if that man wouldn't pose any danger to him

in the future. "Progressor Alliance had various disagreements with those people for a long time. There are quite a few people like him in Twelve World Centrum, but Puppeteer is the only one that can act so crazily and without restraint..."

"Once the news about him chasing you spread, all the Consular Officers controlled by Progressor Alliance received an order from above—" Rena's eyes sparkled when she mentioned 'above' "—that they must conceal information about your whereabouts as far as possible. In addition, all members away from Twelve Worlds Centrum are told to look out for you. We wanted to find you before Puppeteer."

"So that's why both of them are so happy. " Lin Sanjiu thought to herself. As this was something that involved their entire organization, the two kids' faces flushed with excitement knowing that they were the ones who completed the mission.

"Although we don't know how you ended up like this, if you go back to Red Nautilus with us, I'm sure there is a way to help you," Rena said to Lin Sanjiu, in a rare act of comfort. She was about to say something more when she paused and frowned when she looked out of the window.

The two humans and a brain were seated in a triangular manner, facing each other. Therefore, for a moment, none of them noticed what was happening outside. Rena's action instantly drew the attention of Reno and Lin Sanjiu.

A pale, naked, expressionless man had plastered himself to the outside the window of the train and was staring at the three of them, almost as if he was interested in their conversation. Even though this wasn't a common sight, it wasn't much to them. But, the train gradually drew into a station at this point.

Before they knew it, they had reached the station called The Invisible Place.

Chapter 200: Residential Area

Ever since Lin Sanjiu arrived in Kisaragi Station World, The Invisible Place was a station with the name which could be most easily associated with the supernatural. The train slowly pulled into the station and stopped, and the train doors opened with a 'swoosh'. Even though the train carriages around them had already been cleared of duoluozhongs, they saw a few 'people' with greenish faces alighting from the other carriages, as if they had reached their destination.

The pale, naked man, with eyes as large as rice bowls, was right in front of Lin Sanjiu. His eyeballs rolled around obnoxiously. Then, using both his legs and arms, he crawled speedily to the side of the doors like a gecko and poked his head in.

The siblings did not seem to pay any attention to it but were instead looking at the view outside. Rena beckoned for the grayish brain with her hand. "Let's go. We should look at each station," Rena said cheerfully as if they were out on a picnic. Rena's attitude provided Lin Sanjiu with some sense of ease—after she was killed by those duoluozhongs, she would be lying if she said that she wasn't traumatized by that experience.

"That's right. It is such a waste of time if we always return to the same station!" Reno agreed as he delivered a kick to the man at the door. Smoke immediately rose from the spot he kicked. The pale man hissed sharply before turning and escaping far into the dark tunnel.

Apparently, the man from the urban legend of 'the man staring from the window of a traveling train' was pretty weak.

"People from Twelve Worlds Centrum certainly deserve their reputation ." Lin Sanjiu floated over to Rena carefreely and sat on the girl's shoulder. Then, she spelled the words, "Why can you two touch them". Spelling out the long string of words seemed

difficult, but she was starting to feel, perhaps mistakenly, that it was easier for her to control her higher consciousness now. She could almost control it as fast as her thoughts and she found herself completing the question in a quick, smooth sequence.

"Oh, didn't I mentioned this before?" Reno replied while he looked at the station distractedly, "We prepared our outfits specifically for this world. Our shoes act as a sort of black matter medium... Originally, we can't even see them but we intentionally allowed black matter to corrode our eyes."

"We used all sorts of water, eye drops, eyewash... My eyes were red for a few days." Rena quipped.

"That's a method!" Lin Sanjiu almost lamented. Needless to say, Mrs. Manas shouted in a predictable manner, "Look at them!"

Ignoring Mrs. Manas, Lin Sanjiu 'surveyed' her surroundings. This station was as empty as the other stations. Lin Sanjiu had no idea when those duoluozhongs, which just alighted, disappeared. There wasn't a single living thing apart from the three of them. Lin Sanjiu realized that she could see the quiet streets in the residential area through the train windows. It had only been a few hours, but Lin Sanjiu could feel that she had recovered a significant portion of her higher consciousness. Every time she regained some of her higher consciousness, she could see clearer and further, as if someone whose eyesight was improving. At the same time, she felt that the size of her brain form was increasing, it was slowly expanding from the portion where the card of her body was hidden. "Am I slowly regaining my higher consciousness? Should I try to make a mouth?"

"Don't even think about it," Mrs. Manas made her give up her plans. "I already used higher consciousness to 'scan' the entire structure of your head. Every time you gain a bit of higher consciousness, a part of your current form would be sculpted according to your original body... Have you ever seen anyone with a mouth on their brain?"

Lin Sanjiu stopped thinking about it. "That's right." If she had to sculpt her own body, she really didn't know how it would turn out and what she could do if it didn't match her body.

As the two siblings were not spirits, they naturally couldn't hear the conversation between Lin Sanjiu and Mrs. Manas. As they were in a B-level world, and because it was their first trip there, all of them knew that they had to be cautious. Reno led their group, holding a flashlight, while Rena stayed in the rear. Meanwhile, the grayish brain floated sluggishly in the space between them. In this formation, the three of them left the train station.

This was the first time that Lin Sanjiu didn't have to be responsible for the safety of the group. If anything happened, nobody expected her to be the first person to rush out to fight. She was relaxed and even felt that it was a little too hard to adapt to her current status. All she could do was to 'look' at their surroundings, hoping that it would help the siblings a little.

A strong beam from Reno's flashlight tore through the darkness revealing a quiet residential area. There were rows and rows of similar-looking residential buildings. The roads segregated them into a few districts and each of these districts was very orderly. It was as though they were designed with very strict measurements. There were a few supermarkets, convenience stores, tobacco shops, and other merchant shops along the roads. Their doors were still open, as if the apocalyptic event occurred when the shops were still operating. The greenway in the districts hid some of the cars that were parked along the roads.

If they could ignore the fleeting human-shaped shadows behind the various windows in the buildings, the place would be considerably peaceful. "There seem to be only a few duoluozhongs around here," Reno muttered. He shone his flashlight into the distance, waving it around.

Lin Sanjiu bobbed on the spot, expressing that she agreed, based on what she saw. As the siblings only had their eyes corroded by

black matter, there might be special occurrences where they may miss some duoluo zhongs. However, that basically was not a problem for Lin Sanjiu in her higher consciousness form.

"In that case, let's find a place to rest... We haven't finished our conversation on the train." Reno certainly wasn't bothered by this small residential area. He grinned happily as he ran toward the residential building closest to them.

They opened the gate of the residential building while the sound of Rena's accessories jingled. This was a modern residential building, so the security room and elevator lobby were on the first floor, while the residential apartments were upstairs.

"Are you two stupid? There are elevators here, why do you want to take the stairs?"

Reno reached the elevators first, he paused and looked at the elevator which had stopped on the 26th floor. He called his sister and the grayish brain which was flying toward the stairs. He pressed the button for the elevator and the upward arrow on the button lit up. Following which, the elevator gradually came down, as the number on the elevator display slowly decreased.

"There are many supernatural stories surrounding elevators..." Lin Sanjiu thought inwardly. However, she had two capable teenagers with her and she herself was just a higher consciousness entity. Naturally, she didn't have much to fear. When the elevator doors opened, she followed Reno and entered without any hesitation.

"Rena, hurry up!"

The girl only hurried into the elevator after her brother urged her impatiently. "Which floor should we go?"

"Why don't we go to where the elevator was previously? 26th floor."

Reno pressed the button showing 26, and it lit up.

The elevator glided upward.

"Erm, who was the one who suggested 26th floor just now?!"
Rena asked in shock.

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